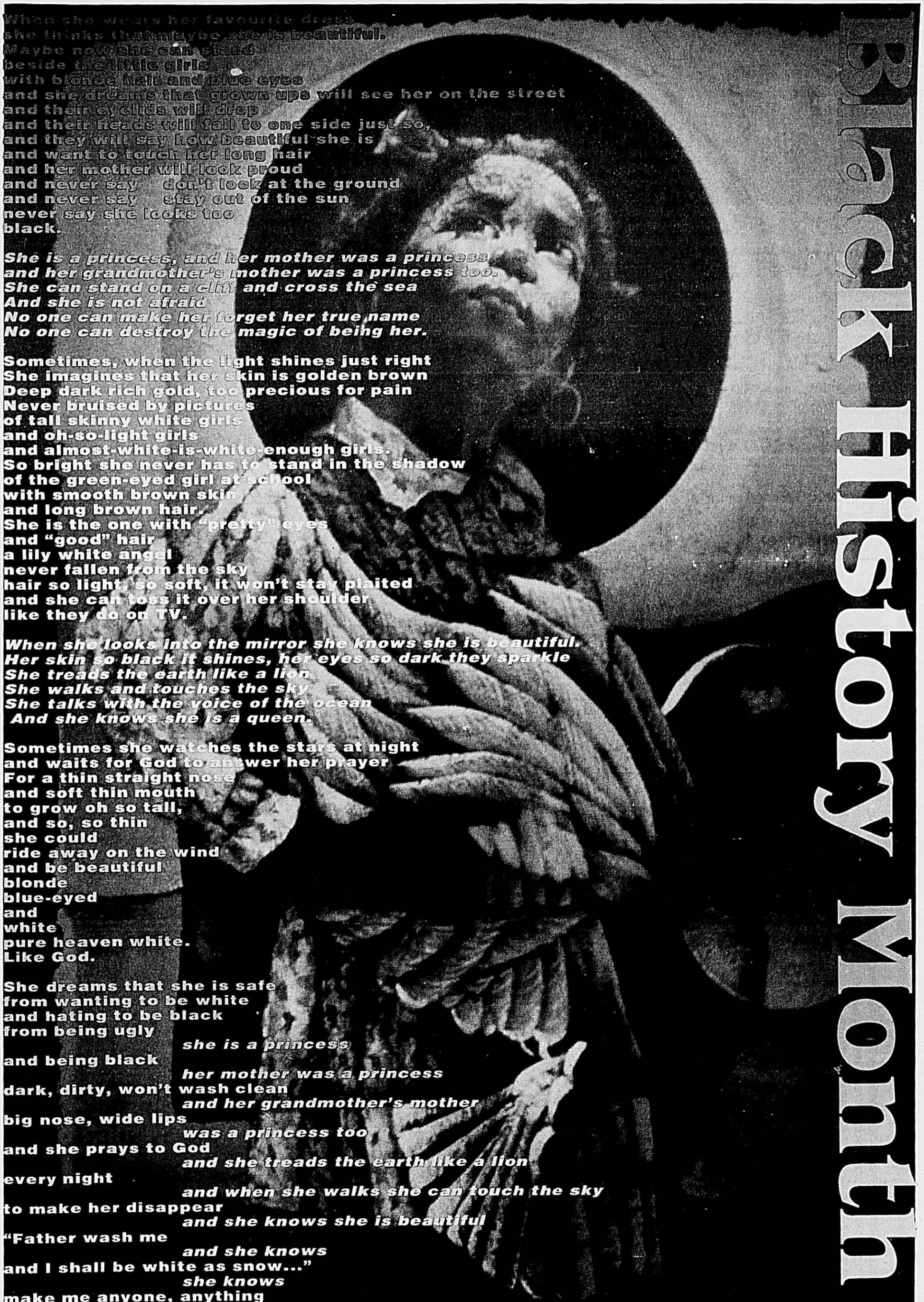
# Black History Month



When she wears her favourite dress
she thinks that maybe she is beautiful.
Maybe now she can stand
beside the little girls
with blonde hair and blue eyes
and she dreams that grown ups will see her on the street
and their eyelids will drop
and their heads will fall to one side just so,
and they will say how beautiful she is
and want to touch her long hair
and her mother will look proud
and never say don't look at the ground
and never say stay out of the sun
never say she looks too
black.

*She is a princess, and her mother was a princess*
*and her grandmother's mother was a princess too.*
*She can stand on a cliff and cross the sea*
*And she is not afraid*
*No one can make her forget her true name*
*No one can destroy the magic of being her.*

Sometimes, when the light shines just right
She imagines that her skin is golden brown
Deep dark rich gold, too precious for pain
Never bruised by pictures
of tall skinny white girls
and oh-so-light girls
and almost-white-is-white-enough girls.
So bright she never has to stand in the shadow
of the green-eyed girl at school
with smooth brown skin
and long brown hair.
She is the one with "pretty" eyes
and "good" hair
a lily white angel
never fallen from the sky
hair so light, so soft, it won't stay plaited
and she can toss it over her shoulder
like they do on TV.

*When she looks into the mirror she knows she is beautiful.*
*Her skin so black it shines, her eyes so dark they sparkle*
*She treads the earth like a lion*
*She walks and touches the sky*
*She talks with the voice of the ocean*
*And she knows she is a queen.*

Sometimes she watches the stars at night
and waits for God to answer her prayer
For a thin straight nose
and soft thin mouth
to grow oh so tall,
and so, so thin
she could
ride away on the wind
and be beautiful
blonde
blue-eyed
and
white
pure heaven white.
Like God.

She dreams that she is safe
from wanting to be white
and hating to be black
from being ugly
*she is a princess*
and being black
*her mother was a princess*
dark, dirty, won't wash clean
*and her grandmother's mother*
big nose, wide lips
*was a princess too*
and she prays to God
*and she treads the earth like a lion*
every night
*and when she walks she can touch the sky*
to make her disappear
*and she knows she is beautiful*
"Father wash me
*and she knows*
and I shall be white as snow..."
*she knows*
make me anyone, anything
*she is*
except
*a queen.*
black.

**SONGS FOR LITTLE BLACK GIRLS** *by Melanie Newton*

The McGill Daily
**Special Issue**
Vol 85 • Number 49
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- Vice President Finance
- Vice President University Affairs

B) **Senators**
- Arts
- Dentistry
- Education
- Engineering
- Law
- Management
- Medicine
- Music
- Religious Studies
- Science

C) **Undergraduate Representative to the Board of Governors (1)**

D) **Inter-Residence Council**
- President
- Vice President Internal
- Vice President Finance
- Vice President Administration
- Representative to SSMU Council

E) **CKUT Board of Directors (2)**

F) **QPIRG Board of Directors (9)**

G) **DAILY Board of Directors (6)**

The nomination forms can be picked up at the Main Desk in the SSMU office in the Shatner Building, 3480 McTavish. Nomination forms are available from February 1, 1996 at 9:00 a.m. until February 12, 1996 at 5:00 p.m. The **deadline** for all nominations and student initiated referendum questions is **February 12, 1996** at **5:00 p.m.** Further inquiries can be directed to the CRO's Joya Balfour or Warren Tranquada at 398-8222 or leave a message at the SSMU Main Desk in the Shatner Building.

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Deadline: Feb 16, Noon

The McGill Daily The McGill Daily The McGill Daily The McGill Daily

**Black History Month Special Issue**

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# National Day of Action just two days away

## ...BUT McGILL WON'T CANCEL CLASSES

*By Roberta Laucke*

Although February 7 will be an important day in student history, McGill's VP Academic, Bill Chan, knew nothing about the event.

"What National Day of Action? What is this?" he asked.

After being informed on the subject, Chan concluded that classes would not be canceled this Wednesday. According to Chan, last year's rally had no effect on scheduled classes and this year the same rules will apply.

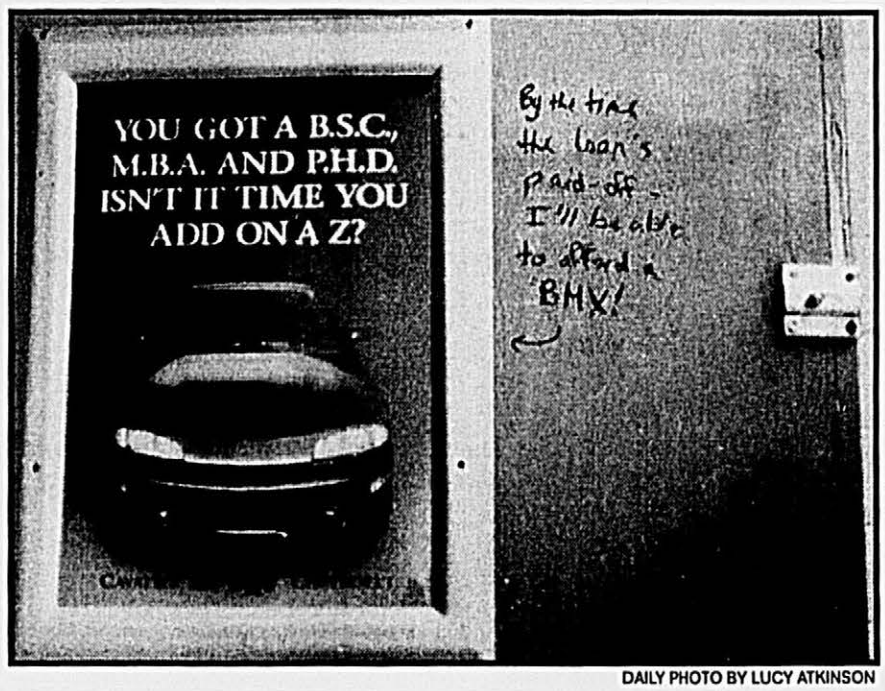
"Classes weren't canceled last time, so, no they won't be canceled now. Academics requires students to go to classes. We have a mandate to follow," he said.

"But students have the freedom to choose whether or not to miss class," Chan hastily added.

Stephen Targett, president of the Post-Graduate Students' Society (PGSS), was not surprised by the administration's decision. "It is expected of McGill not to cancel classes. They didn't roll out the red carpet last year," he observed.

But last year's lack of support did not stop almost 3000 McGill students from skipping their classes to protest the government's proposals.

With the semester moving into its sixth week, though, some students might be reluctant to miss class. "It would be really good if students didn't have to make a choice," acknowledged PGSS councilor Sarah Schmidt.




DAILY PHOTO BY LUCY ATKINSON

Sonia Darcy, a U3 student in English Literature, said she too wished classes had been canceled — to let students send a message to the government without penalty.

"This is a really important day for students. We are at a disadvantage... [I] would like to march but I have a test," she said.

"In fairness to the students classes should have been canceled," Darcy added.

If the government gets its way, cuts to provincial and federal social programs will begin almost immediately.

Starting April 1, 1996, Existing Programme Financing (EPF) and Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) funds will be merged into one sum, the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST).

But April 1 will bring much more than just a change of labels: under the CHST, federal funds for health and social programmes — including post-secondary education — will be slashed by more than 7 billion dollars.

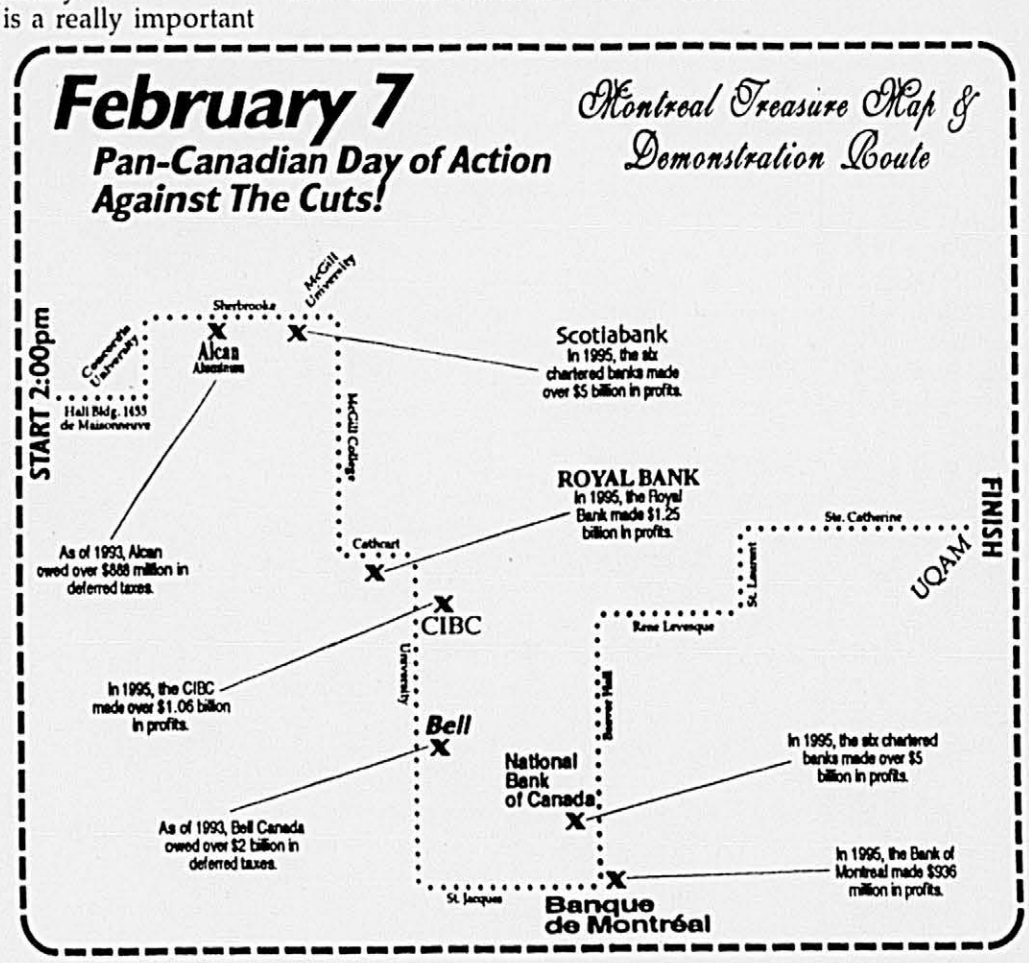
Quebec alone will receive cuts as high as 1.1 billion.

And what does our VP Academic think of this?

"I'm behind the students' interest," he insisted. "However it is unrealistic to say tuition can remain lower then the Canadian average."

But Targett challenged Chan's reasoning. He said tuition fee increases are only unavoidable if "we accept what the government says about social programs being too expensive and having no money."

"[But] these are myths. If we accept them we are accepting higher tuition — and that is a little too much to take," Targett stated.




## The marcher's fashion guide

- Wear dollar store gloves covered by warm mittens, so you can hold your placard longer without getting frostbite on your fingers.
- Make sure you wear comfortable boots.
- Cover your neck well and wear longjohns.
- Put a garbage bag over your clothes to keep out wind, snow or rain. Bright colours a definite plus.
- A thermal flask slung over your shoulders, filled with something warm to drink.
- An umbrella, just in case.
- Noisemakers like tambourines, whistles, pots and pans etc.

# A younger axe?

## Concerns raised over new Minister of Human Resources

*by Kathleen Frederickson*

After their violent oppo sition to the infamous Axworthy proposals, it would seem that student and labour groups would welcome a change of face at the Ministry of Human Resources. It does not bode well, therefore, that Axworthy's replacement, former transport minister Doug Young, is eliciting greater feelings of trepidation.

Young, as one of the more conservative members of the Liberal caucus, is perhaps best known for his privatisation of Canada's railways. However, his cuts in the Ministry of Transport extended even further.

"He slashed jobs, dismantled several crown corporations and encouraged the cutting of badly needed subsidy programs," says Mera Thompson, co-chair of NDP McGill.

But whether his past actions will have any bearing on the future of the Ministry of Human Resources is as yet undetermined. Indeed, the signficance that varying organisations attribute to Young's appointment differs. On one end of the scale, some groups feel that the change foreshadows stringent attacks to Canadian social programs.

"Considering what his position has been in Transport Canada, I don't think it's surprising to say we are a little concerned," commented Nancy Riche, executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress.

Thompson also shares this scepticism, describing Young as "a step backwards from the comparatively `egalitarian' Lloyd Axworthy."

Maude Barlow, national chairperson of the Council of Canadians, agrees. "By choosing someone who is clearly identified as being on the right, who is very much a promoter of privatisation and deregulation and decentralisation, Mr. Chrétien has signalled that they are going to play tough with social programs," she said.

Most student groups, however, don't believe that Young's appointment will mark a significant change in post-secondary funding or the Canada Student Loans' Program (CSLP).

Guy Caron, national chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Student (CFS), points out that Young's influence on such matters is limited. "There won't be much change, because everything that is going on in terms of post-secondary education has very little to do with Human Resources, the whole agenda is coming from the finance department," he said.

Alex Usher, National Director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) agrees, adding that Young is not likely to focus on student issues.

"Doug Young," commented Usher, "is there for one reason only: to make the Employment Insurance package palatable to the Maritimes." While maintaining that "Young is not likely to be an activist in the student affairs portfolio," Usher believes that it would be difficult to predict Young's course of action in his new-found ministry.

However, as Usher notes, Young has commented that he feels more emotionally responsibile towards social programs than towards planes, trains and automobiles. Usher, therefore, believes that Young may be less inclined towards the radical budget slashing for which he is renowned.

"He may not be as draconian as the mainstream media is making him out to be," said Usher.

Reactions on the McGill campus tend to mirror those of the outside world. Students' Society vp-external Andrea Stairs has declared that she will be taking a "wait-and-see attitude" towards the change.

Young is unlikely to focus on post-secondary funding until he has finished handling the changes to the unemployment insurance program, according to Stairs. Beyond that, Stairs feels that it would be "premature" to attempt to divine whether Young's approach will be keeping with the trends established by his predecessor Lloyd Axworthy.

# JUST A MATTER OF BAD TASTE?

## Discrepancies over meaning of 'gang-bang' at U de M

*by Jacquie Jordan*

A Université de Montréal campus party last month has left many people with a lot more than just a hang-over.

On the evening of January 10th, L'Université de Montréal's campus bar le Clandestin welcomed 300 students from the departments of Economics, Nutrition and German Studies for an event which at first glance appeared of an innocent nature.

The three had joined forces to raise funds for their respective associations. Yet the poster advertising the event, which read "Party Gang Bang", left in its wake a scandal jeopardising the reputation of the associations, the bar, and the university itself.

According to the president of the L'U de M's Economics Undergraduate Association, Stéphane Gelgout, it was all a big misunderstanding.

"It was only a publicity theme. We took 'gang-bang' as meaning 'partouze'[a french expression meaning group-sex]. It is only anglophones who take it as meaning a collective rape. For us it means an orgy between consenting adults."

In an interview with Pierre Pascau, host of a popular radio call-in show *l'informateur* on francophone station CKVL, Gelgout said that the students who conceived the sign believed that 'gang-bang' signified an orgy because "in France that is the meaning of the expression."

However, the Cultural Service of the French Consulate in Montréal doesn't agree.

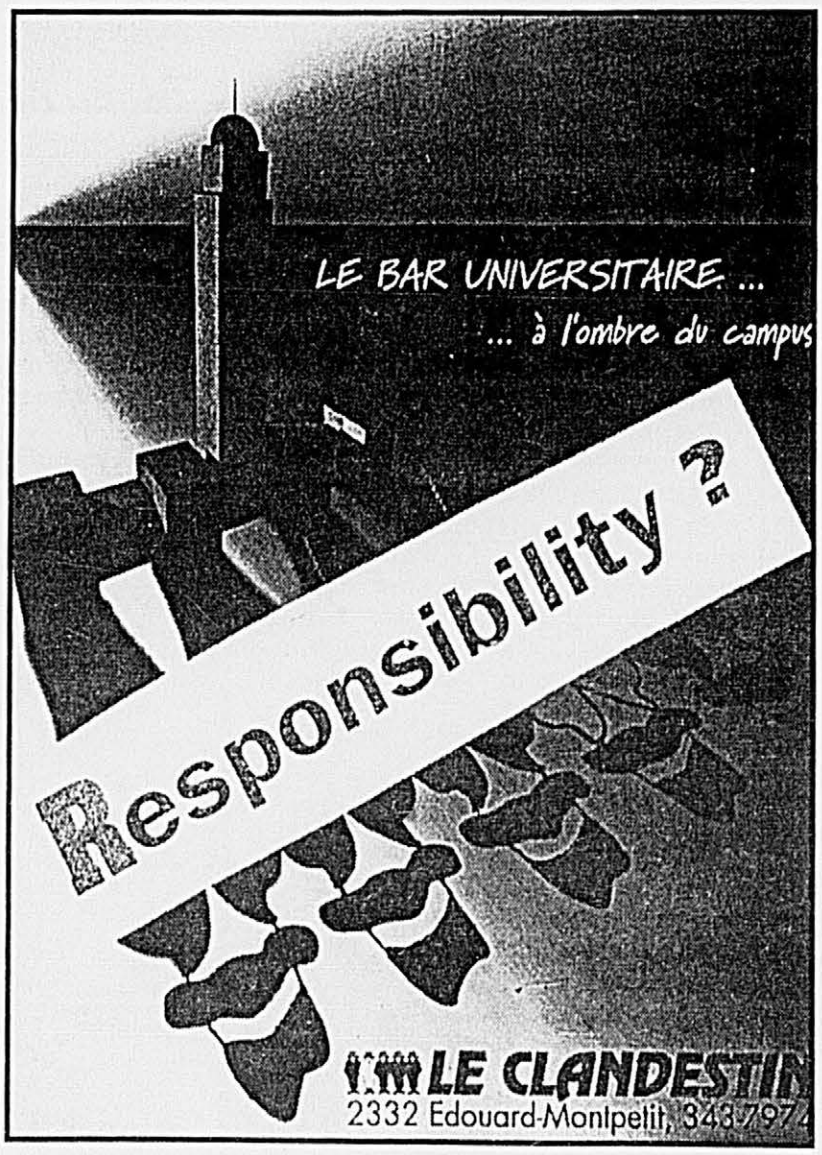
"If he [Gelgout] wants to say that 'gang-bang' is the equivalent to 'partouze', he's wrong. In France it does not mean that at all."

The Oxford dictionary defines gang-bang as: "an occasion on which several men successively have sexual intercourse with one woman."

When asked if he would issue a public apology for the party's theme Gelgout was resolute. "We didn't have one complaint at the party so there is no reason to apologise."

He also pointed out that one of the co-organisers was the department of Nutrition which is composed 97 per cent of women. "Two out of nine members of our Association's board are women," he added, "and one helped organise the party."

Gelgout claimed that the association is sensitive to the issue of violence against women. He pointed to the association passing out bracelets in rememberance of the 14 female victims of the Montréal Massacre at the École Polytechnique which is just a stone's throw from le Clandestin.




The Committee on the Status of Women at L'Université de Montréal has not been quick to react to ramifications of this event. President and Dean of education, Giselle Painchaud, stated that "we have a meeting scheduled for February 8th and I know that it is on our agenda."

Le Clandestin held no responsibility for the content of the ads pinned on their walls. Nicolas Léger, director of public relations told the university's campus newspaper *Quartier Libre* that the posters "were displayed without our approval, [and] the ads violate our rules. We can't associate le Clandestin with just anything."

Gelgout rebutted, saying "posters from previous parties have never been approved by le Clandestin. In theory, they're supposed to be checked over by the bar, but in practice, no one does it."

He cited the O.J. Simpson party held by his association at the beginning of the year as another event publicised without university verification.

At McGill, while it's not sure that such a mishap won't occur, the Students' Society claims that it has safeguards in place. All posters, banners and advertisements posted anywhere in the Shatner University Centre — including Gert's — at least must be checked first by Maria Keenan, the Student Society's building manager.

Keenan stated that receptionists at the Students' Society's counter are trained to look for offensive ads.

Keenan states that "If there is something controversial it is not left to the discretion of the receptionist but is checked through myself and the VP internal if necessary."

# Black History Month

## Special Issue



PAINTING BY LYONEL LAURENÇEAU

# Making history everyday

These are troubling times we live in. The media is on a feeding frenzy, bombarding us with tales of government cutbacks, poverty, violence and ethnic conflict. To hear the media tell it: Black people everywhere — from Rwanda to Haiti to North America's inner-cities— are helpless victims, at the mercy of "tribalism", dictatorship, "black-on-black" crime and "lack of cohesion within the community."

Faced with such negative images it's easy for all members of our society, including Black people, to accept the image of our community being constructed against us in the media. It's easy not to see how fundamentally interconnected our community is with those of other people, and to fall into the belief that you can only dream of influencing the history unfolding before your eyes.

This Black History Month issue does two things — first, it shows how much potential has always existed within the Black community, and continues to exist, to bring about social change all over the globe. Second, it challenges the ridiculous notion that "Black issues" are *only* relevant to Black people.

Throughout time Black people have struggled every day to improve and build our communities, challenging existing authorities and changing the world as we went along. Never passive actors in our own history, we have sought to take charge of our own governments, labour and economic resources through grassroots organising, and — when necessary — armed rebellion.

In struggling for our own rights we have touched people the world over. Independence struggles in Africa in the 1950s and 60's breathed life into the Civil Rights battle in the Unites States, which in turn inspired similar battles around the world. The Civil Rights movement paved the way for the anti-war movement, women's movement and the American Indian Movement, which together shook the very foundations of American society.

Not only have Black people played a significant role in shaping world history, but at times, our contribution has been central. What began as a struggle by South Africa's black majority against apartheid became an international campaign against the last *officially* segregated state in the world.

Today, the fight against dictatorship in Nigeria challenges the basic capitalist assumption that corporations are "impartial political actors".

As we struggle to make the world more just, we gain strength by recognising the fundamental interconnectedness of the issues which arise within our community and the general social and political currents in the society around us.

For example, the threatened closure of a library in Montréal's Black community, discussed in this issue, has meaning for us all as part of the general assault on publicly-funded community services currently being conducted by governments across this country.

The fight for an Africana Studies Program at McGill is part of a wider battle to uproot outdated assumptions about what constitutes a good education, and who gets to set the agenda in our schools and universities.

The social problems within our communities, which seem overwhelming when approached in isolation, can suddenly make sense when looked at in their wider social and historical context. For example, we know that there are intelligent young people in our communities, and yet we are under-represented in the student bodies and faculties or our society's institutions of higher learning. This under representation has nothing to do with a "lack of motivation" among black youth.

At the international level we must not forget that revolutions in Cuba, Haiti and Grenada so threatened the international order that the US invaded them all to stop revolution from spreading.

As Black people every day we shatter the idea that our issues are peripheral. Rather than asking to be "added" to the current idea of history, we should perhaps insist that the concept of history be transformed because our story shows that it is flawed. Rather than saying that governments need to "expand" their agendas to "include" our issues, we should demand that governments alter the way they govern because it doesn't work for us.

This Black History Month, recognise that what is being celebrated is more than just the passing recognition that Black people "have history too." It is the recognition that we are part of the fabric of the world. At various points throughout time our history is the story of the world. And so will it be in the future.

*comment by Melanie Newton*

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# AN ACADEMIC NEGLECT OF HISTORY

## Assessing the literature (or lack thereof) on Black Nova Scotia

*by Jamal Shirley*

As a Black Canadian born in Halifax, it is with utter frustration that I recall how my primary and secondary education in this diverse country contributed virtually nothing to my knowledge of Black Nova Scotians.

Last semester, I decided this had to change. As part of an Anthropology course entitled "Class and Ethnicity", I was given a "legitimate" credit-earning opportunity to learn about the past and present experiences of Black Nova Scotian communities. I regard this knowledge as both essential and long overdue.

At the outset of my research, I anticipated finding a large number of books and articles on Black Nova Scotians and I divised several strategies to isolate relevant literature. To my dismay, a series of key word searches on MUSE produced only a pitiful handful of works on Black Canadians, even fewer on Black Nova Scotians, and only two or three pertaining specifically to Black Nova Scotian communities.

Getting worried, I sought the nearest Peruse terminal and attempted one of those cool combination word searches. "Blacks and Nova Scotia" yielded only two entries. Two! Out of the tens of thousands of journal articles written by social scientists, only a short piece by Stephen Kimber in the journal *Canadian Geographic* was devoted to the Black Nova Scotian experience. The other "article", also by Kimber, was also in *Canadian Geographic* and amounted to a one page summary of Black Nova Scotian history.

Out of necessity, I found Francis Henry's outdated 1973 work entitled *Forgotten Canadians: The Blacks of Nova Scotia* on which I attempted to base a discussion of life in Nova Scotian Black Communities. I tried to talk about Black Nova Scotian perceptions and attitudes both internally and vis a vis White Nova Scotia.

I soon recognized the futility of this effort given the virtual absence of other reference materials. What solid conclusions could possibly be draw from an archaic work offering little more than the insulting conclusion that Nova Scotian Blacks come from a "conservative and subservient tradition" which has worked to perpetuate their poverty and marginality?

As you can imagine, my paper demanded considerable time and energy. I ultimately relied almost totally on a couple of small, pamphlet-like publications by Nova Scotia's Black Cultural Center which I found myself quoting over and over again!

When confronted with the profound implications of what can only be described as academic neglect, you are forced to act questions. In my case I asked why? Why have the achievements of a people who can trace their ancestry in Canada back to the 1700s been denied significant mention in the majority comprehensive texts on Canadian history? Why have outdated, insensitive and even inaccurate studies written by lofty outsiders remained as the staple literature available on Black Nova Scotians?

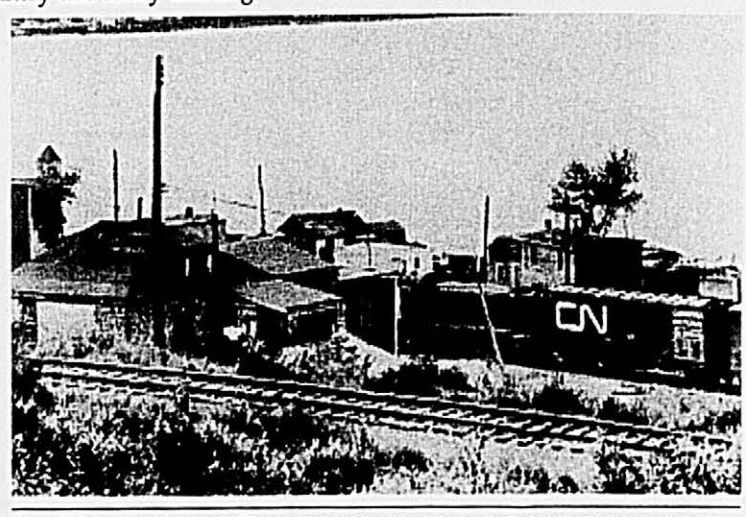
Why aren't contemporary Black Nova Scotians more actively involved in researching and writing about their communities? If the situation here in Montréal is any indication of a larger trend, libraries across this country are sadly lacking in current works by and about Black Nova Scotians.

Instead they are serving as repositories for the often grossly misguided opinions of white authors who scrutinized and prodded Black Nova Scotians in hopes of formulating or proving theoretical models to explain the extreme nature of Black Nova Scotian poverty and marginalisation.

Indeed, an ugly knowledge gap needs to be filled, and an even uglier collection of misrepresentations needs to be acknowledged and addressed. Its time for Black Nova Scotians to speak for themselves and to speak LOUDLY.

Does anyone remember Africville?

*The articles by Kimber are available on the shelves in MacLennan Library, in the Canadian Geographic magazine. All of the other books can also be found at MacLennan.*




IN 1964, THE SMALL BLACK COMMUNITY OF AFRICVILLE, LOCATED ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF HALIFAX, WAS TORN DOWN AND ITS 400 RESIDENTS RELOCATED TO THE CITY AGAINST THEIR WILL.

# Georges-Vanier escapes Bourque's axe

## Community rallies to save crucial library

*by Lisa Phipps*

The people of Montréal's Little Burgundy can breathe easy for a little while, after saving their library from being suddenly closed

Recently, the Georges-Vanier library was threatened with closure in a move by Montréal Mayor Pierre Bourque to save $373 000 from the municipal budget.

But Bourque had to back down from closing Georges-Vanier, giving it a one year reprieve and a shortened staff instead, due to a large outcry from the community. Two other libraries in the city were not so fortunate.

Many in Little Burgundy feel that the Georges-Vanier library has been an integral part of the community's cultural life since it was founded in 1948. The library continues to have a strong connection with various organisations and citizens in the community.

It is the only library in the district which serves three schools with a large, young, black population: La Petite Bourgogne, Tindale, and the Garvey Institute. The Garvey Institute, an english elementary school, has established a Black Studies programme at the library which portrays black children and other ethnic groups in books.

Through this programme, the animators promote more relevant education for the youth of the region.

Specifically, the library houses expositions and carries literature about the history of black peoples, in addition to numerous stories with black heroes instead of stereotypical white heroes. These black protagonists are important because the children can identify with their own ethnic background.

Featuring black protagonists and historical accounts, these books develop a certain awareness of black consciousness which is absent in almost all educational curriculums.

According to Leah Hodge, The Garvey Institute's Vice-President of the Board of Directors, "The library is a part of the education process. Not only do we introduce the children to read and to research information, we also teach them a sense of responsibility. When children take books out, they learn to be responsible enough to bring it back by a certain date."

The school depends on the library's resources for a number of reasons. The children visit the library as a scholastic group every other week. The majority of the books are in French which provides the children an added opportunity to read French.

More importantly , children use the facilities of the library after school, while waiting for their parents to pick them up from work. George-Vanier is within walking distance for the community in Little Burgundy, which makes the library accessible since most people do not have cars.

"Instead of having our young hang out in the streets or arcades, the library environment is much more constructive, to say the least. Resources of this nature help the child develop a sense of autonomy," said Lucie Beaulac, librarian and coordinator.

The librarians have a special relationship with the children. "We educate them by inciting them to read books, and by catering to various needs whether it be caring for a child who was hurt, or answering their many questions," continues Beaulac. "Often parents lack money to buy dictionaries, let alone books."

Youth in Motion, a primarily Black youth centre catering to a 13-17 year old age group, addresses social and cultural issues relating to youth. The centre depends on the library's resources four days a week for a tutoring programme.

Maritza Perez, coordinator of Youth in Motion, feels the library is a necessity, not a luxury. "Ironically, the month before Bourque announced the library cuts, a $100 000 computerised system was implemented. This poses a serious contradiction," said Perez.

"The government continually raises our taxes and we receive less services. It is their responsibilty and our right to receive these services," continued Perez.

Upon hearing about the impending shutdown of the library, the community mobilised and received support from local groups including the Little Burgundy Coalition, the CLSC, library staff, schools, churches, day cares, and the local people. The Mayor did not expect such a reaction. In fact, he expected to get the least reaction from minority communities.

Local empowerment was heard by city councilors, namely Helen Fotopulos from Mile-End, who is lobbying for the libraries to stay open.

"Pierre Bourque's priorities seem to be on the Botanical Gardens, not libraries. In fact, the Mayor plans to allot $40 million to the Botanical Gardens and only $25 million to the libraries. Many library services have been cut altogether," said Fotopulos.

Jeremy Searle, a councilor for Loyola district said that the Mayor backed down because otherwise "it would have meant political suicide because the stigma was too great."

But more important than political considerations seems to be the part libraries play in communities.

Georges-Vanier is a case in point. The library has become an indispensable support system for Little Burgundy's community, especially for the youth and as the public outcry points out, the library is a necessary means of encouraging black youth to expand their knowledge.

# Few and far between

*by Nicholas Boston*

It is late afternoon on the third floor of the Leacock Building. Professor John Iton is reviewing his lecture notes in preparation to teach a class on international trade. "I like to take a walk before going in to teach," says Iton with composure. "It helps to get a change of air."

Iton, an associate professor of Economics, has been teaching at McGill for more than 25 years. He did his undergraduate degree here in the early 1960s. Until 1995 his son, now a professor at the University of Toronto, was a faculty member in the Political Science department.

Looked at in isolation, the Itons' example gives the impression that black professors are a common feature at this university. But has progress really been made in regards to black faculty and employment equity at McGill?

> "I never had a black professor at McGill, female or male. I do not want to have the same absence in law school."
>
> —U3 student Althea Stewart.

## McGill's equity report has gaps

There is a mere handful of black teachers in the 12 faculties and 11 schools that comprise McGill University. There seems to be some awareness of this lack within the school's administration, but year after year, graduating class after the next, the numbers remain the same — or decrease.

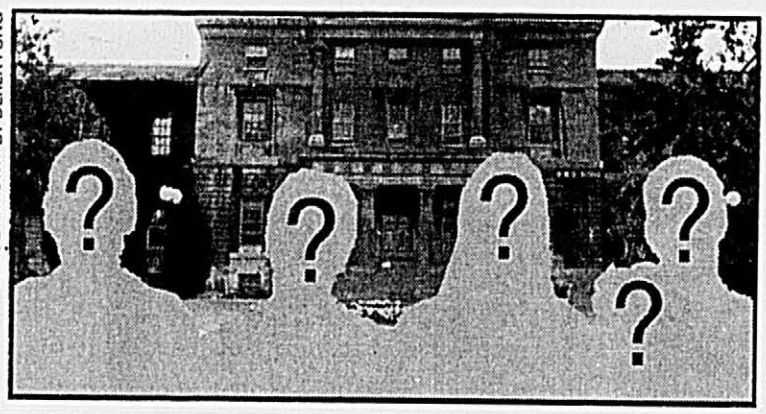


IMAGE ARTISTRY BY DEREK FUNG

In its *Federal Contractors Program Compliance Review Report* the McGill Employment Equity Office "outlines the steps the University is taking to achieve the eleven criteria identified by the federal government for the design and implementation of an employment equity program."

According to this 55-page document the Federal Contractors Program (FCP) was "established by the federal government to ensure that organizations doing business with it achieve and maintain a fair and representative workforce."

FCP policy states that the university's representation of "designated groups" must compare favourably with the number of qualified candidates belonging to the same "designated groups" within the provincial, national or municipal area labour force.

In 1992 McGill's Employment Equity Office sent out a "self-identification questionnaire" to 5 176 McGill faculty and staff. Members were requested to select their "designated group" from among women, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities.

The information received led Employment Equity to conclude that "the representation of visible minorities, at twelve percent of the McGill workforce, is greater than that of the local, provincial and national labour forces."

There are a few minor complications to this seemingly progressive model. First of all, as the Equity office acknowledged, the resulting statistics represented multiple occupational categories — such as technicians, clerical and service staff — not just faculty. In addition, the overall response rate to said questionnaire was only 60 per cent.

The questionnaire also did not specify racial and ethnic categories. Instead, respondents were given the choice of "visible minority" as an identity.

Choosing the passive option, Employment Equity sent out the self-identification questionnaires rather than assertively tackling the issue at hand. This effectively placed the onus (let's not say "responsibility") on those who are themselves marginalised. Where "visible minorities" are concerned, the program has yet to go beyond sending out questionnaires and collecting data.

The Compliance Review Report admits that, "Prior to the census data of 1992, the university did not collect any information on these groups (aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities).

The Report also admits that the data are inconclusive because, "the information reported in the employment equity census is self-reported. Thus the representation of members of these groups may be over- or under-estimated."

Ultimately, the Report confirms the suspicion that McGill is another point along the continuum of the devaluation of people of colour in education and the workforce. To believe that employment equity within the university is successful because it mirrors that of the national labour force is to be complicit with an already unjust order.

Iton suggests that we need to look deeper to get to the root of black underrepresentation on McGill's faculty.

> "I would venture to say that the problem [of too few black professors] is a supply problem... The hiring is done at the department level, and I do not remember ever having seen a single black candidate [for Economics]."
>
> — Richard Iton, McGill Economics Professor.

"I would venture to say that the problem [of too few black professors] is a supply problem," says Iton. "Somewhere along the line, blacks are either not being attracted into [academia] or are U.S. citizens for whom McGill is not a first choice."

He adds, "The hiring is done at the department level, and I do not remember ever having seen a single black candidate [for Economics]. My thought on the matter is that you have to look farther back."

## How can students envision themselves?

For many black students the lack of black faculty is more than a statistical entanglement. Generally, black students put the present number of black professors at somewhere between five and ten.

On the way to her feminist Legal Theory class in Chancellor Day Hall, U3 student Althea Stewart passes through a welcoming hallway decorated on both walls with pictures of past and present faculty members. Unlike Althea, none of the people pictured are black *and* female.

A joint honours major in English and Women's Studies, Althea is doing her thesis on black women and spirituality. Next year, she intends to go to law school, and she says that faculty representation of people of colour is a major consideration in her choice of schools.

"I never had a black professor at McGill, female or male," recounts Althea. "I do not want to have the same absence in law school."

Althea says that, as a Canadian, she has no interest in leaving her home to pursue her degree at an American law school. In her opinion, Black Canadians should not have to emigrate in order to access a well-rounded, culturally diverse education.

Last November, Patricia Williams, black law professor at Columbia University, gave a speech here at McGill. Althea attended, and to her surprise was struck by a profound sense of longing.

"Sitting there watching [Williams] made me wonder what it would be like to have this experience all the time in a classroom," she says, adding "I started envisioning myself with her as my professor."

*Envisioning myself.* Perhaps these words encapsulate the essence of what is being stated here. How do black students — or students of all races — envision themselves in relation to academia, knowledge and authority when these things are represented as overwhelmingly white and male?

Nobody wants to be thought of as unfair, least of all an institution of higher learning with a worldwide reputation. As an intellectual community, we need to accept the reality of systemic, institutional racism in our society, and begin to organise around this reality.

A popular slogan for black education is *Each one, Teach one.* This raises the question, does gender, race or ethnicity play a large part in mentorship?

To this question, Professor Iton responds jovially, but with a hint of pragmatism, "Of course... but, sometimes [mentorship is] just not there."

# Why aren't there more black professors at McGill?

GARRY T PROMOTIONS
PRESENTS
BLACK HISTORY MONTH
featuring DJ KWITE SANE, DJ MIKE MISSION, DJ MAJESS, DJ SIR, DJ GROOVE, DJ SMOOTH, TEKNIQUE & DJ RED DREDD
MEGA JAM
SAT. FEB 3 • CLUB VANGUARD 1824 STE-CATHERINE W.
dj kwite sane buttah birthday bash
FEATURING DJ KWITE SANE, DJ MIKE MISSION, DJ SMOKEY, DJ RICH, DJ ICE & DJ SMOOTH
SAT. FEB 10 • CLUB VANGUARD 1824 STE-CATHERINE W.
NEW YORK funk&hiphopjam
DJ DOO WOP
Live From The Mecca Club, NYC
SAT. FEB 17 at Deli Pub International 70 Notre Dame W.
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former lead singer of Black Uhuru
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# A legacy of resistance

## *The story of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense*

*by Joelle Bolduc*

On October 15, 1966, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, two students at Merrit Junior College in Oakland, California decided that enough was enough: racism and outright brutality against Blacks had gone far enough. Inspired by revolutionary thinkers such as Mao Zedong, Franz Fanon, and Malcolm X, Newton and Seale wrote a 10-point programme outlining the platform of what was to become the Black Panther Party for Self Defense.

These points included demands for self-determination, full employment, decent housing, relevant education, a jury of peers, a Black nation within the U.S., and freedom from police brutality, jail and military service. The program also called for revolution through the eradication of capitalism which they believed was responsible for the misery of numerous Americans, Black and White alike.

The Black Power movement was a source of inspiration for Seale, Newton, and Black youths living in urban ghettoes. as they became increasingly frustrated with the approach of the Civil Rights Movement. Young activists were no longer satisfied with King's style of peaceful demonstrations and negotiations with the white establishment.

Intense rioting had broken out across U.S. cities in the summer of 1965. Despite amendments to the law, nothing had changed for disadvantaged Blacks living in urban ghettoes where unemployment was rampant, living conditions often substandard, and police violence a daily occurrence.

In January 1960, new forms of civil disobedience campaigns began. Sit-ins at segregated lunch counters as well as theatre pickets were organised by students all around the South leading to the creation of a powerful organisation: the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).with Stokely Carmichael at its head.

SNCC would become increasingly radical as the extreme brutality directed at Blacks deemed "out of their place" by certain Whites intensified.

In the summer of 1966 SNCC organisers launched the Black Power slogan. with the panther as its symbol.

As Carmichael, would say in the New York Review of Books in the Fall of 1966: "A man needs a black panther on his side when he and his family must endure loss of job, eviction, starvation, and sometimes death, for political activity. He may also need a gun, and SNCC reaffirms the right of Black men everywhere to defend themselves if threatened or attacked."

The BPP would take up this challenge. Their first target was the Oakland Police Department. Newton, Seale, and their first recruit Bobby Hutton, armed with guns and law books, set off to "police the police" in their neighbourhood. Whenever they saw the "Pigs" harassing or arresting a Black person they jumped from their car and surrounded them.

Guns in plain sight (the law in California permitted individuals to carry unconcealed weapons), tape recorder and camera running, they would not interfere but simply witness the scene. The police usually left in a hurry.

Besides run-ins with the law, The Black Panthers had other community activities. As early as 1967 they had started a Free Breakfast for School Children Program in Oakland. Convenience stores, supermarkets, dairy suppliers, and restaurants were asked to donate supplies for the program which served breakfast to children before they went to school.

Panthers also set up a free medical clinic where diagnostic tests were conducted for sickle-cell anemia, a hereditary disease which disproportionately affects Black people. The number of tests performed through this clinic by far exceeded those of any such government program.

Panther community services also provided free clothing and shoes for the most needy, free education and assistance for the elderly, as well as free elementary education for children through the Oakland Community Learning Center.

Other issues mobilised Panther women in particular, such as the passing of a state law legalising abortion for Black and poor women only. This was perceived as a direct threat to the Black community and to women's control over their own bodies. The fear was that voluntary abortions would lead to the forced sterilisation of these women.

The BPP were catapulted onto the national spotlight on May 2, 1967 when 30 Black Panthers stormed the State Capitol Building in Sacramento. Dressed in black and armed with shotguns and rifles, they were protesting a gun control law that had been proposed in the legislature, apparently tailored to disarm the Panthers.




FOR THE PANTHERS, SELF-DEFENSE MEANT MORE THAN JUST GUNS, IT MEANT TAKING CARE OF THEIR COMMUNITIES. THE BLACK PANTHERS SET UP SEVERAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY KITCHENS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

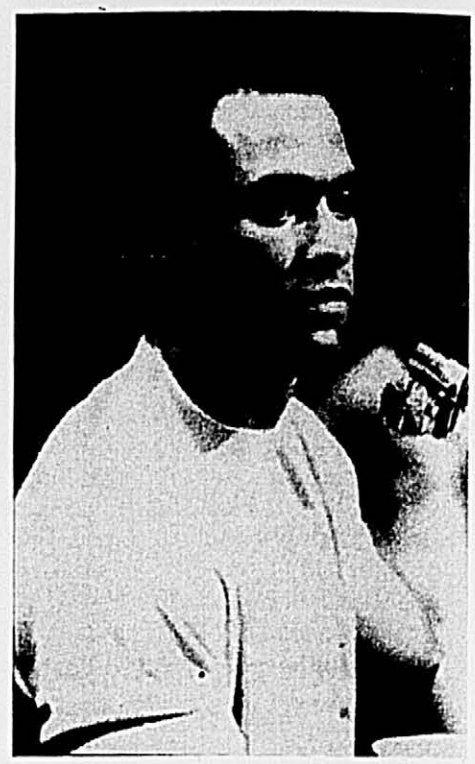
In the end, the bill passed, but the images of the action captured the imaginations of Americans: Black men bearing arms. Some would fall under their spell, others would be terror-struck, but people could hardly be indifferent.

A major turning point in Panther history was the shooting of officer John Frey of the Oakland PD. On the night of October 28, 1967, Huey Newton and a friend were stopped by the police. A shootout erupted leaving Frey dead and Newton and another officer wounded. Newton was arrested, charged with murder, and later convicted by an all White jury.

The party, spearheaded by Bobby Seale, launched a massive "Free Huey" campaign across America and abroad. Money and support poured in; new chapters were started. The height of this campaign corresponded with the height of the Party where between 1968 and 1970 membership ranged from 2 000 to 5 000 members.

Huey's case brought to light the perversity of the American legal system. Would it ever be possible for a Black person to receive a fair trial? Was pleading self defense possible when a White police officer had been killed?

Whatever favourable publicity this event had for the BPP, ultimately much of the group's resources were depleted in paying for lawyers and posting bail money as the number of run-ins between the Panthers and the police continued to rise. According to author Hugh Pearson in *The Shadow of the Panther*, in 1969 alone 348 Panthers were arrested on a variety of charges.)



HUEY P. NEWTON, CO-FOUNDER OF THE BLACK PANTHER FOR SELF DEFENSE.

The dynamics of the BPP were anything but simple; violence and humanitarian ideals went hand in hand, reflecting the complex personalities of the Party's main leaders. The self-defense element of the Panthers led to intensified repression by state authorities.

On September 8, 1968, J. Edgar Hoover, then head of the FBI, declared in the *New York Times* that he considered the BPP as "the greatest [single] threat to the internal security of the country." The FBI's Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) used all the means at their disposal, both legal and illegal, to neutralise Panther activity.

At no time were these tactics better used than after 1970. Huey Newton had been released from prison on a technicality. Soon there was a rift between him and Eldridge Cleaver and Cleaver was eventually forced into exile, first to Cuba and later to Algeria. As the two leaders grew further apart, schisms occurred in the Panther rank and file. The leaders were well aware of FBI activity within the Movement, occasioning growing paranoia on their part.

The Party was purged of so-called dissidents; many others simply left because of disillusionment with the direction the Panthers were taking, and some were forced underground where they would join the Black Liberation Army led by Eldridge Cleaver.

The political repression exercised by the FBI was a major factor in the decline of the Black Panthers and their eventual redirection under the leadership of Elaine Brown starting from 1974, the first and only woman to head the BPP.

This era marks the Panthers' entry into local politics. Elaine Brown ran for Oakland city council twice - and was defeated both times by a slim margin — while Bobby Seale would run for mayor. However, the Black Panther empire was gradually crumbling and by the early 1980's the BPP essentially finished.

The Black Panther Party was created in 1966 by two young men driven by their ideals of creating a better society and by their extreme anger at the situation Blacks in America found themselves in. When racism pervades every aspect of a society and further exacerbates class differences; when violence, repression, and fear are part of one's daily experience, what can be done?

Violence may very well be the only means that enables one to stand up straight, regain one's dignity, and finally be heard. This I feel is the legacy of the Black Panthers. Can we prove them wrong?

## DALIT PANTHER MANIFESTO:

**We do not want a little place in the heart of Brahman Alley. We want rule of the whole country. Change of heart, liberal education will not end our state of exploitation. When we gather a revolutionary mass, rouse the people, out of the struggle of this giant mass will come the tidal wave of revolution. We will build the organisation of the workers, dalits, landless, poor peasants throughout all city factories, in all villages. We will hit back against all injustice perpetrated on dalits. We will well and truly destroy the caste and varna system that thrives on people's misery, which exploits the people, and liberate the dalits. The present legal system and state have turned all our dreams into dust. To eradicate the injustice against dalits, they themselves must become rulers. This is the people's democracy. Sympathizers and members of the Dalit Panthers, be ready for the final struggle of dalits. — 1973**

# From Oakland to Orissa

## AND BLACK PANTHER TO DALIT

*by Ahmer Qadeer*

*People do not win freedom for themselves, rather they expand the struggle for freedom worldwide.*
*-C.L.R. James.*

It was not what the Black Panthers did that made them significant. It was what they were. Black Panther parties sprang up in many places throughout the African diaspora—Brazil, Britain, South Africa—as people were inspired by the Black struggle for freedom during the 1960s and 70's. But the Panther's influence extended beyond people of African descent.

By 1973, the FBI's COINTELPRO program had for the most part destroyed the Black Panther Party. However, in the same year on the other side of the world a new Panther movement was emerging. During the spring of 1973, the Dalit Panthers rose out of a meeting of artists, writers, poets and community activists in the Indian state of Maharashtra.

The Dalit Panthers made a connnection between racial discrimination in the United States and caste-based discrimination in India. The "Dalits" (literally translated as "downtrodden") were those members of Indian society who were considered the lowest on the social scale, in particular, people of the Shudra or "untouchable" castes.

The decision to identify as Dalits had begun with Dr. Philip Ambedkar in the 1920's and 30's. Ambedkar was a Shudra who had broken with the Indian National Congress over the question of caste.

The Indian National Congress had been agitating for self-rule from Britain since the 1880's, but it had not been active in opposing divisons of caste.

Ambedkar decided that a rejection of caste was necessary for liberation, and he began to identify himself as Buddhist, rather than Hindu or Shudra or even "Harijan" (children of God as Gandhi had called them). Ambedkar also rejected Gandhi's attempts to unify the Hindu vote by not attacking the caste system. He maintained that freedom from the British was meaningless without freedom from caste.

Some time after the death of Dr. Ambedkar, a group of writers and poets had begun to call themselves Dalits. They wrote about the social conditions and lives of Dalits, and other members of the lower castes.

### THE PANTHERS RISE

The Dalit Panthers grew out of this tradition and its rejection of the caste system. In addition the Dalit Panthers' refusal to subordinate the caste question to that of class, as many Indian leftists did, appealed to youth all over India.

Although the Dalit Panthers remained small in numbers, they were extremely influential. From Maharasthra to Orissa, Nagaland to Tamil Nadu, Shudras refused to let themselves be subjected to caste discrimination.

In March 1973, after a policeman raped a low caste woman in Bombay, the Panthers marched on the policeman's home and hanged him. Dalits challenged untouchability all over India in much the same way as Blacks in the Southern United States challenged segregation. When Brahmans refused to allow Dalits to enter the Shrinavasi temple in Karnataka, for fear that they would "defile" the temple, the Dalits returned the next day to "defile Brahman alley — by pissing and shitting in their holy water". Village wells that Dalits were not allowed to drink from, were used as toilets.

The Dalit Panthers were the newest form of a struggle that was as old as caste itself. They were continuing in the traditions of Dr. Ambedkar.

The Dalit Panthers never had the resources to meet with or effectively communicate with the Black Panthers themselves or other Black American community activists of the time. Despite this, they still drew inspiration from the attitudes and writings of Malcolm X, Huey Newton and other Black American writers and thinkers.

Although internal divisions eventually destroyed the Dalit Panthers their impact on Indian society was significant and can still be felt. Members of the Dalit Panthers split away to join the Indian Communist Party and the Congress Party. Other Dalit Panthers formed their own small local parties which were elected to parliament and eventually allied with the Congress Party.

Others refused to enter into parliamentary politics and felt that revolution by Dalits was the solution. Some of them formed the Dalit International — aimed at abolishing caste and racism across the globe. Others felt that the way forward for Dalits was to concentrate on developing the Dalit community.

The Dalit Panthers expanded the anti-caste struggle througout the Indian sub-continent, but they failed in many ways to build a cohesive anti-caste struggle. Still, they have shown the tremendous potential for change that exists across the globe.

*For more information on the Dalit Panthers, read Reinventing Revolution by Gail Omvedt, the life and writings of Dr. Ambedkar, Songs of Freedom, by M. Patanayak, or Liberation is Coming! by A.R. Gangurde. All are available in the McLennan-Redpath Library.*

# VOIX DE FEMMES NOIRES

*par Corinne Bossé*

«Tout ce qui touche à la femme noire est objet de controverse». C'est du moins ce qu'affirme Maryse Condé dans son essai, *La parole des femmes*. Selon l'auteur, il y a des positions contradictoires concernant le statut de la femme noire. D'un côté, l'occident «s'est apitoyé sur ces "mutilations sexuelles", et s'est voulu l'initiateur de sa libération» Par opposition, une école de pensée africaine a placé la femme noire sur un tel piédestal qu'on en est parvenu «à une totale idéalisation de son image et de ses fonctions» . Au-delà de ces divergences d'opinion, il semble qu'un certain malaise règne quant à l'image même de la femme noire. Notamment, sur le plan littéraire.

Louée ou méprisée, la femme noire occupe une place ambiguë dans la littérature. Bien souvent, elle est représentée comme objet de désir, sorcière envoûtante, Vénus noire; bref une créature exotique placée dans un décor artificiel de Club Med. Fort heureusement, il existe des oeuvres qui rejettent et dépassent ces images stéréotypées. Fait intéressant, plusieurs romancières originaires des Antilles de langue française ont contribué au renouveau de l'image littéraire de la femme noire.

Certaines romancières des Caraïbes ont exploré des sujets controversés. Plusieurs romans campent des héroïnes aux prises avec les clivages et les tabous raciaux. Mayotte Capécia est une des premières écrivaines qui a osé défier les conventions sociales des Antilles. Ses deux romans, *Je suis Martiniquaise* (1948) et *La Négresse blanche* (1950) racontent l'amour d'une femme antillaise pour un homme blanc. Dans la même veine, *Sapotille et le Serin d'argile* (1960) de Michèle Lacrosil est un roman d'éducation qui met en relief les mécanismes de la bourgeoisie antillaise. De plus, cette oeuvre classique a le mérite d'offrir une analyse psychologique des personnages qui reflète encore la mentalité antillaise.



*«Femme nue, femme noire*
*Je chante ta beauté qui passe,*
*forme que je fixe dans l'Éternel*
*Avant que le Destin jaloux ne te*
*réduise en cendres pour*
*nourrir les racines de la vie.»*
*—Senghor, Chants d'Ombre*

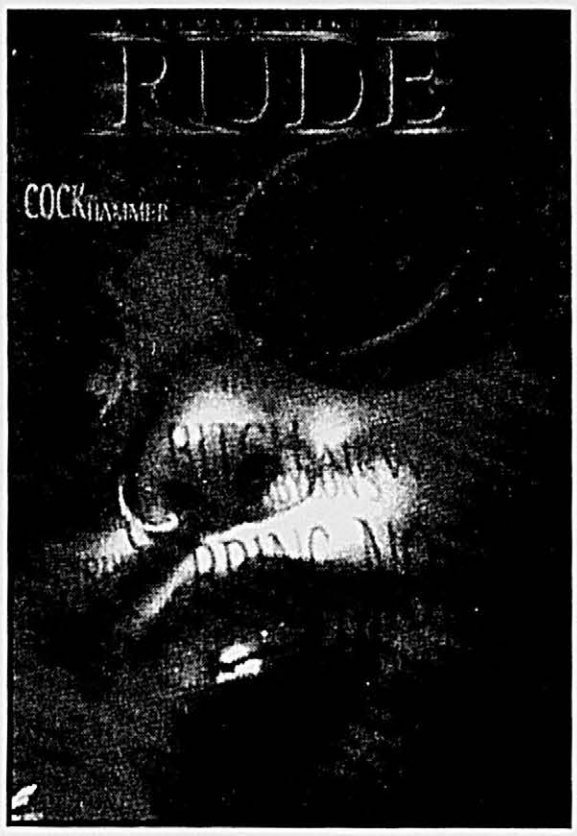
Maryse Condé, citée au début de l'article, fait partie de ces écrivains qui offrent une perspective moderne de l'image littéraire de la femme antillaise. Parmi les romans qu'elle a publiés, citons *Hérémakhonon* (1976). Dans cette oeuvre, la romancière martiniquaise porte un regard critique sur les moeurs sociales des Antilles. Simone Schwarz-Bart est une autre romancière qui privilégie le rôle des femmes noires dans l'histoire avec son roman guadeloupéen *Pluie et Vent sur Télémée Miracle* (1972). L'originalité de cette oeuvre réside également dans les tournures créoles qui imprègnent son française . Sur la scène littéraire haïtienne, nous retrouvons Marie Chauvet avec *Fille d'Haïti* et *Amour, colère et folie*.. Ses deux romans décrivent la relation entre la violence politique et les femmes. Marie-Thérèse Colimon explore le même thème dans *Fils de misère* (1984) qui lui a valu le Prix France-Haïti.

En somme, ce mois de commémoration de l'histoire des Noirs est une occasion de découvrir des romancières trop souvent méconnues par les circuits littéraires dominants. Ne prétendant surtout pas résoudre les problèmes, elles abordent néanmoins des thèmes qui sont encore d'actualité. A travers leurs oeuvres, l'image de la femme noire demeure complexe. Cette complexité traduit sans doute l'angoisse d'être noire dans un monde blanc.

# Rude but worth seeing

## DIRECTOR VIRGO MOVES BEYOND STEREOTYPES

*by Anne Harewood*




Clement Virgo's *Rude* made history in Canada in 1995. It was the first film to be written, directed and produced by a black team. It was also Virgo's first feature film, following his acclaimed *Save My Lost Nigga Soul*. His first effort was awarded the John Spotton Award for the Best Canadian Short Film at the 1993 Toronto International Film Festival.

*Rude* was inspired by Virgo's experiences in Toronto's Regent Park in which he felt a strong sense of community. This is reflected in the lead character Rude, a radio deejay whose voice is the consciousness of the community. Her words speak for the main characters, whose lives are explored in the film. Sharon M. Lewis plays the role of Rude to perfection. Her sultry voice and provocative style force the audience to listen attentively.

The movie addresses controversial issues such as homophobia, abortion and drug dealing. These topics help make *Rude* a powerful work of art.

The movie is set in a stylised inner-city and reflects the lives of three characters who are stuggling for redemption and acceptance. Though these characters never cross paths, one can see that their struggles share similarities which interconnect them.

Jordan (Richard Chevolleau) is a promising young boxer who must come to grips with his sexuality after actively participating in an incident of gay-bashing with his friends. This assault forces Jordan to confront his own homosexuality and learn to cope with the homophobia that is so prevalent among his network of friends.

Virgo's choice to address homophobia through a "macho" boxer is unique because it defies the usual stereotypes about homosexuals. Often, homosexuals are portrayed in the media as white, "feminine", skinny men whose occupations range from ballet to hair dressing. Instead, Virgo makes Jordan a strong man with a love for the aggression of boxing. He states that this was a response to what he saw in the Black community, especially in reggae music like Buju Banton's controversial song that spoke about shooting "Batty Boys" in the head. He wanted to challenge this notion, and it appears that he did this successfully in the film.

Maxine (Rachel Crawford) is a window dresser who goes into a serious depression after having an abortion and losing her spouse simultaneously. She isolates herself from the rest of the world due to her inability to deal with her situation.

The movie does not take sides on the abortion issue. Instead, it examines the trauma that a woman can experience after going through the procedure. This aspect of the film is important because it is rare for an audience to witness this side of the abortion issue — the mental trauma which many women face.

A weakness of the film is that it does not make it clear why Maxine's spouse left her. It is unclear whether he left because she was pregnant or because of other issues in their relationship.

Maurice Dean Wint is brilliant as the character General, an artist and ex-drug dealer recently released from prison. General leaves jail rehabilitated and eagerly awaiting a reunion with his wife and son. Although his dream becomes a reality, he is continuously confronted with the temptation of resorting back to his old way of life. In one scene, feeling ashamed because he can't afford to buy a popsicle for his son, General reflects on his days as a dealer when money was in abundance.

General is especially torn because his wife Jessica (Melanie Nicholls-King) is a cop who gives him another chance on the condition that he stay away from drugs. General is portrayed as a caring human being with a conscience. The ruthless, egotistical drug dealer image usually portrayed in Hollywood movies is replaced by an artist and loving father.

This film never misses a beat with its incredible cinematography and symbolism: When dealing with controversial issues, a lion is shown throughout the film to symbolise the characters' collective anger and struggle.

*Rude* is captivating on screen. The strong performances of the cast compliment the great directing of Clement Virgo, making *Rude* a movie well worth seeing.

# Not Another Talk Show...

*by Sandra Jackson*

Oprah, Ricki, Jerry Springer, Gordon Elliot, Geraldo, Jenny Jones, Sally Jesse, Donahue, Garbrielle, Leeza, Montell Williams, Rolanda, Tempestt, Carnie, Maury and Danny.

These are just a few of the talk shows I had the pleasure of viewing on my recent trip home to Toronto. And the phenomenon seems to be growing at an alarming rate.

These days, everyone and anyone has a talk show. A host of washed-up TV, movie and rock stars are now trying to reclaim their fame by hosting their own show.

Catchy titles such as "If your mother stole your man..." or "Your man keeps cheatin' on you" are just a sample of the kind of informative topics discussed on these quality shows. I remember the days of just Oprah, Donahue and Sally Jesse, when the topics included Welfare Legislation, an interview with Maya Angelou, or the on-going problem of race relations.

Although Oprah insists on keeping her show at this level of quality, she is becoming increasingly alone in her desire to review truly relevant topics.

The majority of these shows are strictly for entertainment purposes. If you enjoy watching people "air their dirty laundry" on television, then these shows are for you.

Don't get me wrong. I am definitely not a devout Oprah watcher and I think talk shows, as a whole, have over-stayed their welcome. However, I do believe that Oprah is the lesser of all these evils.

Talk shows have become a forum for promiscuity and the degradation of women.

The majority of the guests are involved in dysfunctional relationships, which are glorified by the laughter of the audience and the tremendous amount of airtime it receives. These dysfunctional couples receive advice from ill-informed guests, "Hollywood" experts, and the opinionated host.

Problems and issues which require serious discussion are treated as a comedy show for the audience and viewers.

Where my concern lies, and why this article is in the Black History Month issue, is that an overwhelming amount of the guests are African-Americans.

Too often under-educated, young and impressionable Black youth are brought on to these shows to discuss serious problems in their lives. But the underlying issues of low self-esteem, unhealthy family dynamics, and the lack of opportunities for urban youth are never addressed.

Instead, these guests are subjected to badgering from the audience and host, or are left to "battle it out" among themselves. This is a form of exploitation.

Talk shows are consistent with the rest of the American media's portrayal of the stereotypical image of young African-Americans.



OPRAH: AN ISLAND OF RELEVANCE IN AN OCEAN OF STEREOTYPES.

These shows allow the American public to blame the individual for their circumstances, rather than taking responsibility for their dysfunctional society as a whole.

The issues that are explored on these shows need to be dealt with seriously.

More talk show hosts need to follow the Oprah Winfrey model. First rather than cramming the stage with a ridiculous amount of people, I think shows should deal with one case at a time. Second of all, shows should have informed analyses from qualified experts making professional assessments, and providing legitimate advice and counseling where necessary.

I am not suggesting that only serious topics should be explored on talk shows, but I believe that there needs to be more focus on informing people, rather then entertaining them.

Talk shows have been useful. They have forced Western society to recognise and examine problems that are occurring within the wider community.

However, the talk shows that are on TV right now are redundant, one or two is more then enough. Instead of creating a new talk show everyday, producers should explore other means to educate or entertain people. More than half of the shows presently on the air need to be cancelled, and those that are "somewhat" legitimate need to be refined.

Instead of just mirroring society's problems uncritically, talk shows should strive to become more of a voice for marginalised groups — not aid in their oppression and exploitation.

# A CLOSER LOOK AT SICKLE CELL

## A misunderstood and underfunded disease

*by Adrian Wright*



There are always two, if not three sides to every story and the case of sickle cell is no exception.

Despite popular misperception, sickle cell is a *trait* that is passed on genetically, not a "disease", and must be distinguished from sickle cell anemia.

### GETTING THE TERMS STRAIGHT

Sickle Cell Anemia (SCA) is a condition that only results when an individual is homozygous for the sickle cell gene, (meaning s/he inherits the sickle gene from both parents). Although there are many ways SCA manifests itself, it is usually the presence of hemoglobin S in the red blood cells that causes the cells to take on an irregular shape. The sickle shape decreases the lifespan and number of red blood cells in the circulation. Consequently, the person is chronically anemic.

Technically, sickle cell *disease* is a medical term referring to the characteristic symptoms of SCA; but more importantly it includes the "crises" - the active periods of the disease - and complications that may result which require medical treatment.

A person with only one copy of the sickle cell gene will have some sickle-shaped red blood cells (the sickle cell *trait*), but they do not have and cannot develop sickle cell anemia. These individuals are carriers.

A child born of two carriers has a 25 percent chance of developing sickle cell anemia, and a fifty percent chance of being a carrier.

### NOT A GENETIC DISEASE

SCA is a blood disorder that affects predominantly, but not entirely, descendants of Africa and the diaspora. It is estimated that 55 000 persons in North America today suffer from SCA. According to statistics from the Canadian Sickle Cell Society (CSCS), sickle cell trait occurs in one in every ten Canadian blacks, whereas SCA occurs in one in every 400.

But sickle cell has a wide population distribution. Six percent of the individuals in Canadian hospitals who suffer from SCA are not black. SCA and its variant forms have been described in persons and their descendants from, among other countries, Southern India, Greece, Syria and Turkey.

Nonetheless, sickle cell is still misperceived as a problem for blacks. This misconception, in addition to low-level public awareness, may help to explain the dwindling public support, government funding and small operating budgets with which organisations and patient advocacy groups like the CSCS have to deal with.

**SOME COMMONLY HELD MISCONCEPTIONS & HALF-TRUTHS ABOUT SICKLE CELL**

1. SICKLE CELL "DISEASE" IS PASSED ON GENETICALLY.
2. SICKLE CELL TRAIT AND SICKLE CELL ANEMIA ARE THE SAME THING.
3. SICKLE CELL ANEMIA AFFECTS ONLY BLACK PEOPLE.

### SICKLE CELL STIGMATISED...

The most infamous example of racial stigmatisation comes from the U.S. According to statistics from the March Of Dimes, the U.S. government's National Sickle Cell Control Act and Genetic Diseases Act allocated $20 million over 8 years.

Although the federal funding was meant to reduce the morbidity and mortality caused by sickle cell through research and clinical aid, the emphasis was put on mandatory prenatal diagnosis and screening programs in which all black children had to be tested for sickle cell.

Lack of public education and proper counselling meant that sickle cell was thought to be a debilitating and ultimately fatal disease. Becuase of this, cases of fetuses being aborted to "reduce the costs to society" after genetic screening were reported.

Following the government's lead, many companies insisted that all black employees or applicants be tested, with the aim of reducing the potential loss of productivity or to accommodate workers to a more suitable position.

Because it was cheaper to dismiss rather than to relocate the employees, during these public (mis)information campaigns against those with sickle cell, many blacks were refused jobs. 60 per cent of blacks who were carriers became unemployed or were fired outright because of employer ignorance. An estimated 23 per cent of blacks who became unemployed did not even have the sickle cell trait.

This unethical (mis)use of genetic information was a landmark example of social injustice. The value of genetic screening is only apparent when it provides individuals with information that allows them to make autonomous decisions. Besides being a breach of employee privacy/confidentiality, the situation in the U.S was a paternalistic intrusion on an individual's right to self-determination and the civil rights of blacks as a group.

Furthermore, with proper medical attention and employer education, having sickle cell anemia has no bearing on worker efficiency.

### NO TO SCREENING, YES TO SERVICE

The U.S. government-initiated programs for reducing the impact of sickle cell were underfunded. Most funding made available was allocated to research, treatment, and screening for this "potential health risk", while neglecting social support and services for individuals and families living with sickle cell.

In the late '70s and early '80s, it was shown that with proper medical care sickle cell was neither necessarily debilitating nor fatal. Amidst public dissatisfaction and bad press much of the massive funding for these dubious screening programs was withdrawn. Sickle cell service programs remain badly underfunded.

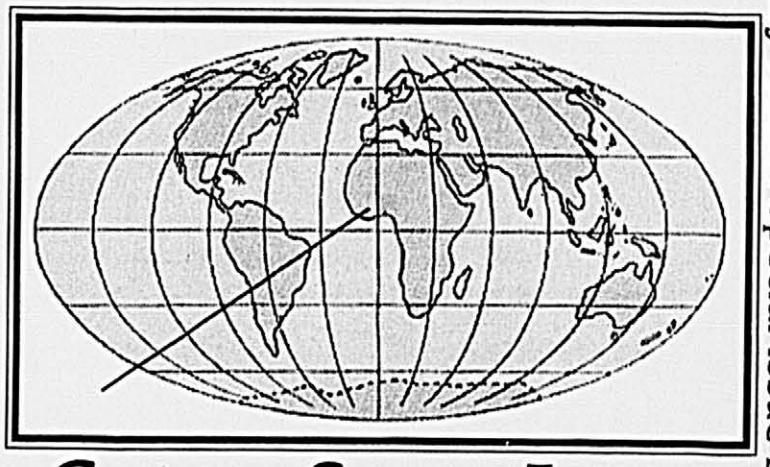
In Canada, with the exception of Montréal and Ontario, sickle cell programs that were well funded in the early '80s have not managed to survive budget cuts. Today, grants from federally funded umbrella groups has provided the primary support for sickle cell service organisations.

Despite their past problems a need for screening practices still exists. In order to prevent certain complications that can arise from SCA, parents must be aware of the presence of the condition. Doctors recommend that children diagnosed with SCA be given proper immunisation and vaccination as well as daily prophylactic treatment with penicillin to prevent infections. And while it is always stressed that a sickle cell test should be done prenatally or at birth for couples of African descent, the numbers suggest that other groups also have reason to be informed and have their children screened.

*As students we can help through educating the general population by disseminating information about sickle cell and volunteering.*

*Since 1977 the Canadian Sickle Cell Society, located here in Montreal, has been the primary organization involved in screening, education, training volunteers, lobbying, advocacy and providing family service to individuals and families with sickle cell. For the past two decades it has provided these services on a small operating budget and sustaining grants. For more information and/or to lend support contact:*

*The Canadian Sickle Cell Society*
*6999 Cotes des Nieges, Suite #33*
*Montreal PQ, Canada H3S 2B8*
*(514) 735-5100*



# COUP IN SIERRA LEONE

Young officers, who seized power in Sierra Leone in 1992, threw doubt on "democratic" elections scheduled for February 26. This is due to head of state Captain Valentine Strasser being shunted aside by his deputy, Brigardier Julius Maada Bio.

The new leadership in Freetown insists elections will be held. Political party leaders who met Bio on Wednesday, say they trust him as does the head of the election committee.

However, many Sierra Leoneons expect the military to call off the vote, citing civil war in which rebel attacks have devastated the economy and cut off much of the country. "There will be no elections on February 26" said one peace campaigner, a member of a group promoting dialogue with "rebels" as an essential step towards lasting democracy.

*Souce: Eye on Africa-Africa Net*

# Tings

*by David Austin*



REGGAE POET LINTON KWESI JOHNSON

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the break-up of the former Soviet Bloc many see little potential for any form of positive change in the world.

Pessimism abounds, it fills the air we breathe these days. Many in the so-called "left", having licked their wounds, have made amends with their former foes. They've concluded that we can't win against those who exploit, oppress, and maim in the never-ending, and seemingly irrational quest for greater profit. If you can't beat them, join them.

"All our efforts have failed," they say. "The situation is hopeless, rule of equality a farce, and that there are no viable alternatives to the present state of affairs."

Then a poet emerges on the scene, cuts through the muck and goes straight to the heart of the matter. But Jamaican-born poet Linton Kwesi Johnson (LKJ), who coined the phrase 'dub poetry' in the late '70's, is hardly a newcomer. Since his inauguration on to the dub poetry-reggae scene in 1978 with the album *Dread, Beat, an Blood* he has been a model of relentless, critical propagandization of the struggles of Black people.

**From Fanon to Linton: revolutionary madness**

Linton has that uncanny ability to capture life 'from down below'. Most of his poetry embodies three major themes: the oppression of Blacks, particularly in England, where he has lived since 1963; the various responses to this oppression; and lastly the potential for changing these conditions and, to that extent, society in as a whole.

What is immediately striking about LKJ's first album, *Dread Beat an' Blood*, is his apparent obsession with violence and bloodshed. Take for example the following verses from the song 'Five Nights of Bleeding'. The first stanza sets the tone for the rest of the poem:

madness...madness...
madness tight on the heads of the rebel;
the bitterness erupts like a hot-blast.
broke glass;
rituals of blood on the burning,
served by a cruel in-fighting;
five nights of terror and of bleeding.
broke glass;
cold blades as sharp as the eyes of hate
and stabbings.
it's war amongst the rebels:
madness... mad
ness...
war

**YOUT REBELS**

**a bran new breed of blacks have now emerged, leadin on the rough scene, breakin away takin the day, sayin to capital neva movin forwud hevva.**

Then, in the second stanza, Linton describes one of these 'five nights of bleeding', each one of which takes place at a party or 'blues dance' as they are often called in England. It reads:

night number one was in BRIXTON
SOFRANO B sound system
was a beating out a rhythm with a fire,
coming doun his reggae-reggae wire;
it was a sound shaking doun your spinal column,
a bad music tearing up your flesh;
and the rebels them start fighting;
the yout them just turn wild.
it's war amongst the rebels:
madness...madness...war.

So what we have are 'rebels'-rebellious, angry youth at a party fighting amongst themselves, seemingly without reason. A party is happening, full of intense, powerful, blood-boiling, pulsating music in rooms packed with gyrating dancers.

But what at face value seems to be a simple description of a spontaneous eruption of violence is not all what it appears to be. To capture what Linton is getting at we must look at the work of another great Black social thinker whose analysis of oppression and violence helped shape the minds and actions of a whole generation.

In his influential book *The Wretched of the Earth* Frantz Fanon, the late Martiniquan discusses the role dance and certain rituals play as a coping mechanism under colonial oppression. A clinical psychiatrist by profession, Fanon joined and later became a spokesperson for the Algerian National Liberation Front during their anti-colonial struggle. In addition Fanon wrote *A Dying Colonialism; Black Skins,White Masks*, and *Towards the African Revolution.*

In *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon writes, "The native's relaxation takes precisely the form of muscular orgy in which the most acute aggressivity and the most impelling violence are canalized, transformed and conjured away."

He likens the party to a "seemingly unorganized pantomime" which is, in reality, quite systematic. Through "shakes of the head, bending of the spinal column, throwing of the whole body backwards" a community seeks "to exorcise itself, to liberate itself, to explain itself."

Linton, it appears, appropriates Fanon's graphic and eloquent description of this "exorcism" of pent up colonial frustrations and broadens its application to countries, particularly England, where Blacks are a minority.

The blues dances that Linton describes in 'Five Nights of Bleeding' are the equivalent of Fanon's "muscular demonstrations" or "orgies." As Fanon points out these orgies "have caused certain very wise men to say that the native is a hysterical type." Isn't this reminiscent of what many say about the dancehall, reggae, rap, and calypso scene today?

Again referring to these colonial dance sessions, Fanon states "this sensitive emotionalism...will find its fulfillment through eroticism in the driving forces behind the dissolution of the [the colonial system]." Doesn't this sound particularly like the current dancehall, rap, and calypso scene?

**a "righteous righteous war"**

But where does the violence come in? Fanon states that "there are no limits- for in reality your purpose in coming together is to allow the accumulated libido, the hampered aggressivity to dissolve as in a volcanic eruption." He continues: "Symbolic killings, fantastic rites, imaginary mass murders - all must be brought out."

**they can only be new in age but not in rage, not needin the soft and also shallow councilin of the soot-brained sage in chain; wreckin then-shelled words movin always forwud.**

Fanon's graphic description conjures up images of dancehall parties where hands are raised in a gun-like fashion, with sound effects to match. Every so often a real gun is brought out and fired symbolically into the ceiling.

But if this analysis, which Linton applies to Black Britons, places dancehall "culture" within a broader social context, then where does the actual fratricidal violence come into play?

"It is as if plunging into a fraternal blood-bath allowed them to ignore the obstacle, and to put off till later the choice, nevertheless inevitable, which opens up the question of armed resistance to colonialism," writes Fanon.

This behavior allows the native "to bypass the settler" while "the cause of misfortunes and of poverty are attributed to God".

Unable to directly confront the enemy in any coherent way the oppressed mass turns on itself for muscular and psychological release of pent-up anger and frustrations. Unfortunately, such acts are often characterized — often by mean-spirited "experts" who know, or at least should know better — as an integral part of Black behavior, etched in the psyche of Black folks.

Meanwhile poverty, oppression, and general inequality, the root causes of most individual violent behavior (as opposed to state, military, and the corporate kind) are dismissed or overlooked.

But as conditions ripen for change on an ever widening scale, as the prospects for freedom broaden, or as the conditions become so extreme that they can only improve, this implosive fratricidal violence becomes explosive. It is redirected towards the oppressor. The fourth stanza of LKJ's 'Five Nights of Bleeding' reads:

night number three,
over the river,
right outside the RAINBOW:
inside JAMES BROWN was screaming soul,
outside the rebels were freezing cold;
babylonian tyrants descended,
pounced on the brothers who were bold;
so with a flick of a wrist,
a jab and a stab,
the song of blades was sounded,
the bile of oppression was vomited,
and two policemen wounded.
righteous righteous war.

Standing outside a party, two youths are harassed by the police. Frustrated, the two young men unleash their anger on these "babylonian tyrants". For Linton, the rebels' reaction is part of a "righteous righteous war". The "pouncing" by the po-

**young blood yout rebels: new shapes shapin new patterns creatin new links linkin blood risin surely carvin a new path, movin forwud to freedom.**

# an'Times

## Frantz Fanon and the revolutionary poetry of Linton Kwesi Johnson



Frantz Fanon, author of *The Wretched of the Earth* and spokesperson for the Algerian National Liberation Front during their anti-colonial struggle.

lice was unjustified and the rebels' actions, in defence of themselves, justified.

"Fratricide is only the first phase," says Linton in the poem 'Doun de Road'. He continues the theme of violence and examines, more specifically, the qualitative shift from implosive violence to its explosive form:

> heavy heavy terror
> on the rampage...
> o dont you worry
> it is so near...
> fatricide is only
> the first phase...

He describes how the "violence of the oppressor [is] runnin wild", they are "pickin up we yout them fe suss" (short for suspicion). This refers to a law passed by the British government allowing the police to pick up 'suspicious looking' people. In reality this often resulted in groundless arrests of young Blacks.

And to make things worse, the "the National Front", a violently racist group in England, is on the rampage "making fire bombs fe burn we."

**The essence of social change**

Under these oppressive conditions, fraticidal violence runs rampant. But Linton sees this violence as just the beginning:

> fatricide is only the first phase,
> with brother fighting brother stabbing brother:
> them jus killin off them one another,
> but when you see your brother blood jus flow;
> futile fighting; then you know
> that the first phase must come to an end
> and time for the second phase to show.
>
> And what is this second phase?
> With their backs to the wall and the knife at their throats, the oppressed no longer have energy for fratricidal violence. In Fanon's own words "the native discovers reality and transforms it into the pattern of his customs, into the practice of violence and into his plan for freedom."

Fratricidal violence for the colonial, for the oppressed group, now assumes a coherent form. No longer do the oppressed feel the need to release tensions on their kin. The *necessity* no longer exists. Instead, not simply random violence but a coherent plan of action, less spontaneous, better organized, and equipped to deal with the concrete, objective conditions as they confront the oppressed mass.

The oppressed or exploited group, become conscious of itself, its condition, and its actions, and works actively to change them.

It is at this point that we see the self-activity of people, the capacity to adapt to conditions and circumstances as they arise and act accordingly in order to concretely change negative conditions into more positive ones. Linton Kwesi Johnson, like Frantz Fanon, gets to the essence of social change.

People make change and it is often when times seem to be the most dismal, the most static and the most hopeless, that, like a 'thief in the night', things begin to ferment. It was this kind of fermentation that brought the very Soviet Union into being. In part, it was this ferment which brought it to its knees when, for many, it had outlived its usefulness.

As socio-economic conditions this side of the world disintegrate more and more young people are becoming disillusioned. And as the unemployed and disinherited are pushed onto the streets in ever-increasing numbers, or pushed into crime or other desperate acts, people will continue to move, fight and struggle to make this world a more inhabitable place.

This world, in the words of LKJ - from the CD *Tings an Times* which is dedicated to the late visionary C.L.R. James and inspired by the recent changes in Eastern Europe - in which

> ... di grass is greenah an sweetah
> whichpawt di breeze blow is like a balm
> whichpawt di stream run quietah an coolah
> whichpawt life can be pleasant can calm

---

*The Black Students Network of McGill University*

# List of events for Black History Month 1996

### Ongoing February 1-28

• Exhibition on Africana Studies in Redpath-McLennan Library

### Monday February 5

• The McGill *Daily*'s Black History Month Special Issue available on campus.

• Are you a person of colour who is transgender, two-spirited, gay, lesbian, bisexual? Come to the first social event of a new discussion group for queers of colour. 435 Shatner, 18h -20h. Sponsored by LBGTM & Shakti.

### Tuesday February 6

• Mark Sherman of MSIDL will be giving a presentation on his experiences working in international development in Sierra Leone. All are welcome!

### Thursday February 8

• Shakti, Women of colour collective will be meeting at 18h at QPIRG, 3647 University. All women of colour welcome.

• Arnold Weinrib, Professor of Law at the University of Toronto, will be speaking about *Black Students and Law School* at the BSN general meeting, 17:30h, Thomson House.

### Friday February 9

• BSN Movie Night in the Union Building (rm. 107/ 8)

### Saturday February 10

• DJ kwite sane - buttah birthday bash. Club Vanguard, 1824 Ste. Catherine W. Info 739-9125.

### Monday February 12-13

• Art Exhibition (rm 301)

### Tuesday February 13

• Children's Day '96, Shatner Bldg. Ballroom, with Storyteller Itah Sadu performing at 10h30 and 14h30, reggae singer Paula Clark at 14h and a dance workshop at 14h30 by Audley Cohen.

### Wednesday February 14

• Guest Speaker Esmerelda M.A. Thornhill, Lawyer and Human Rights Educator, speaks on "Removing Blindfolds Baring Facts: Blacks in the Americas" 12h-13h30 in the Hall Building, H535-1, Concordia University. For more info on Concordia UQAM's Race & Racism Series call 848-8728.

• Janet Siltanen's "Segregation & Inequality: The Significance of Gendered Occupational Distribution," 55 Sherbrooke West at 15h.

• Association of Black Human Service Workers and McGill School of Social Work Student Council presents "Black Women and Aids" with guest speaker Sonia Brereton and Edith Duterville of Femmes Vaillantes. 3506 University, Wendy Patrick Room, 12h- 14h. 398-6696.

### Thursday February 15

• Poetry Night with a Difference — A Forum for Our Lesbian Sisters, 2725 Notre Dame West, 19h -21h. For more info call 938-1188.

### Saturday February 17

• Black Talk: 16 hours of Black Programming on CKUT 90.3 F.M. (Radio McGill) Topics include the social, political and cultural situation of peoples of African descent everywhere. Tune In!

• Garry T Promotions presents New York funk & hiphop jam. DJ Doo Wop live from The Mecca Club, NYC at Deli Pub International, 70 Notre Dame W. Info: 739-9125.

### Thursday February 22

• Black History Month reggae jam with Michael Rose, former lead singer of Black Uhuru, and Sampalue and Virgo. Club Soda, 5240 ave. du Parc. 270-7848.

### Sunday February 25

• Black feminist lesbian/ poet/ mother/ warrior benefit screening of *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*. J.A. DeSeve Cinema, Concordia University, room 125, 19h.

### Monday February 26

• BSN Movie night, Shatner Building, rm 107/ 108.

### Wednesday February 28

• BSN Movie Night — *Peter Tosh: Steppin Razor, Red X* (rm 107).

### Friday March 1

• Islamic Society & Islamic Culture Network present guest speaker Mr. Idris Palmer talks about "The Nation of Islam" (Actual Islamic Perspective),

Bronfman Building rm. 151 Time TBA. For More Info: 843-5297.

• Kilamanjaro, the world's greatest reggae sound live from Kingston, Jamaica. Special guests Virgo and Black Temple. Bingo Palace 7050 St. Jacques W. Info 739-9125.

### Friday March 8

• Speaker Barbara Ransby from DePaul University's Centre for Research on African and African-American Studies speaks on "The Role of Black Students in the Black Freedom Movement".

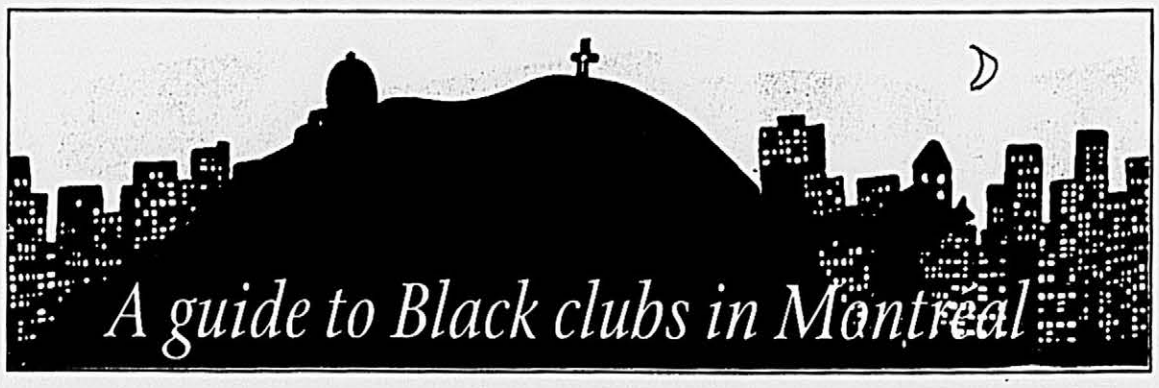
• A 43-minute video which presents a history of the African people through the centuries. To get your copy of "Let us Tell You About Our People" contact Gordie Blackman or Louise Chambers at 697 3210.

*For more information about events during Black History Month, contact the Black Students' Network at 3480 McTavish, Rm 406; Montréal, QC; H3A 1X9., tel. 398-6815.*

# PARTY OVER HERE!

## A guide to Black clubs in Montréal

*by Tracy Moore*



If you're sitting at home bored and decide you want to go to a club, don't plan on being picky 'cuz there aren't a whole lot of options.

In fact you're going to have to choose between attending one of the few black clubs which check ID's and those which do not (and proceed to admit anyone within the age range of 13 to 40 years old.) If you do the smart thing and choose the club which has a systematic ID check, count on paying a cover charge of approximately $10 — that's right, ten bucks — no prizes, gift certificates or drinks included.

Wait a minute! We've gone way ahead of ourselves. Before you even *get* to hand over your hard earned weekly wage of 10 ducats you have to wait in line first. The good news is that there are only about five people in line ahead of you — the bad news is that it's still going to take you an hour to get in.

Let me explain. When you've been in the line for awhile, you'll begin to notice two mobs of people forming at two different angles leading to the door. Here's the secret... none of the clubgoers in these two pseudo-lines are getting in any time soon. Only close personal friends of the two insipid door bouncers get admittance privileges.

Standing in line myself one night, I watched one frustrated patron's desperate attempt to get an explanation for the 45-minute hold up. She politely inquired why the line wasn't going anywhere.

To this question, one of the bouncers — Tweedledee or Tweedledum, I can't remember which one — replied, "Where were you in the summer?" From this response they received an assorted range of perplexed expressions from the crowd. Check the logic: "If you'd supported us in the summer, we'd let you in now."

This little glimpse of club bouncer brilliance confirmed two of my prior suspicions. First, clubs engage in strict IQ testing before hiring their bouncers. Second, Montréal club policy is completely illogical. By the way, it may not be the wisest idea to interrogate the bouncer twins too much — you may find yourself the last to be let inside (trust me, I know).

So, you've waited and complained and *finally* you've made it inside the club. Now, don't get upset because you logically concluded that you were forced to wait an hour in sub-zero weather because it was completely packed inside.

You'll be able to see with your own two eyes that there are about two or three people leaning up by the dee jay booth, four or five hovering around the bar and about 10 or so hiding in unlit corners of the club. Oh yeah, there's also the middle age couple boogeying down with moves from the 70's (don't mind them - they show up at every club.)

This is just another one of the many ways club owners make patrons hate them. They let one person in every 20 minutes until there's only about an hour of club time left and the majority of the crowd is forced to pay full price.

Now I've just *got* to pose a question to the greater Montréal area: Where are the dee jays with skills?

Contrary to popular belief the term "disc jockey" does not only refer to someone who can put records on a turntable and place the needle gently on the record — even I ca

In do that. So far in Montréal, I've heard a lot of dee jays whose sole talent is knowing how to make the crowd have a sudden yearning to go home to bed.

I propose a change-up of traditional club terminology. From now on a dee jay is an individual who has skills, who can mix music, tease the crowd by overlapping samples, and knows how to control and hype an audience. All the other people trying to front behind dee jay booths will hereafter be known as "record players" because that's exactly what they do.

So, now you know the rules of the game, what to expect and even more importantly, what NOT to expect.

That's it club-goers — but remember be prepared for a wait, don't be too picky about the music and don't wear white short-shorts and thigh high white patent leather boots (that's just gross!).

# Eye on the world

### SELLING PRIVATISATION IN HAITI

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with the parent involvement of the World Bank and the approval of the Haitian government, signed an $800 000 contract with a Canadian public relations firm to hype privatisation .It is to go ahead "immediately" said one USAID official.

There remains intense and widespread opposition to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund's Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) which has been designed for Haiti. It is one of the most radical programs being implemented anywhere in the world.

The SAP has already led to the complete elimination of export duties and the sharp reduction of import tariffs. That means trouble for most of Haiti's population, which lives in the countryside.

Foreign goods are already flooding into the country, threatening the ability of farmers to sell their produce. To be sure, peasants growing corn, Haiti's largest crop, with only a hoe and a machete cannot hope to compete with the massive combine harvesters of Bob Dole's Kansas.

*Source: Haiti Progress*

### THE LAWSUIT THAT COULD ROCK THE *NEW YORK TIMES*:

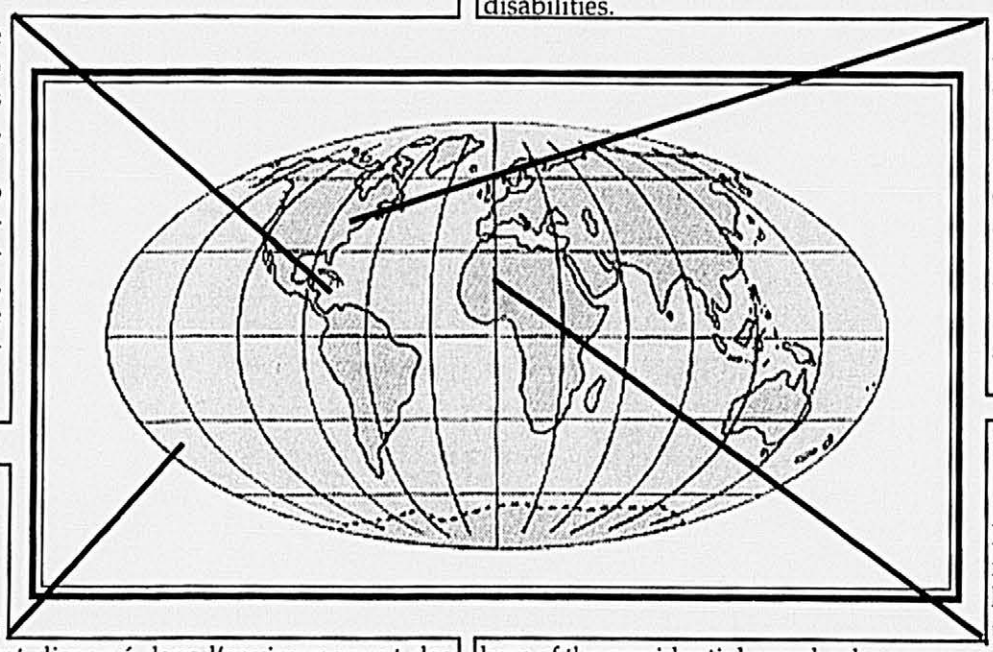
In 1992, Angela Dodson became the first African American female senior editor and the highest ranking black woman in the history of the *New York Times*

What no outsider could have guessed is that even as she was being promoted, Dodson was clashing with her superiors. Last fall, after less than four years as a senior editor, she was fired.

In November, Dodson filed a lawsuit charging the *Times* with discriminating against her because of gender and race and eventually because of work related disabilities.

"The *Times* engaged in gender-based harassment and disability-based discrimination in order to make my work so stressful that I would be forced to leave my job because the *Times* no longer wanted me, as a Black person, to occupy a position as a Senior Editor," Dodson wrote in a complaint she filed with the city's Human Rights Commission.

*Source: Voice*



### LES EFFETS DES TESTS NUCLÉAIRES À MORUROA ET À FANGATAUFA

Les nombreux tests atmosphériques et souterrains à Moruroa et à Fangataufa ont dispersé dans l'environnement des centaines de kilogrammes de plutonium et autres produits très radioactifs. Dire que les tests nucléaires français ne posent aucun problème pour l'environnement serait, d'un point de vue écologique, affirmer qu'il n'y a jamais eu de contamination à Moruroa et à Fangataufa. Ce serait également dire que la matière radioactive présente sur les îles est contrôlée de telle manière que tout échappement dans l'environnement est impossible dans les milliers d'années à venir. Ces deux affirmations sont évidemment fausses.

*Source : Lycos-Catalogue of the Internet*

### COUP D'ÉTAT IN NIGER:

Soldiers seized Niger's President Mahamane Ousmane at the parliament building January 27 and took him away to an unknown destination, witnesses said. About ten members of the presidential guard, who accompanied Mahamane to the building, fled and dived into the nearby Niger river, after the arriving soldiers opened fire on the buildings, witnesses added.

The sub-Saharan state has been following economic reforms prescribed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

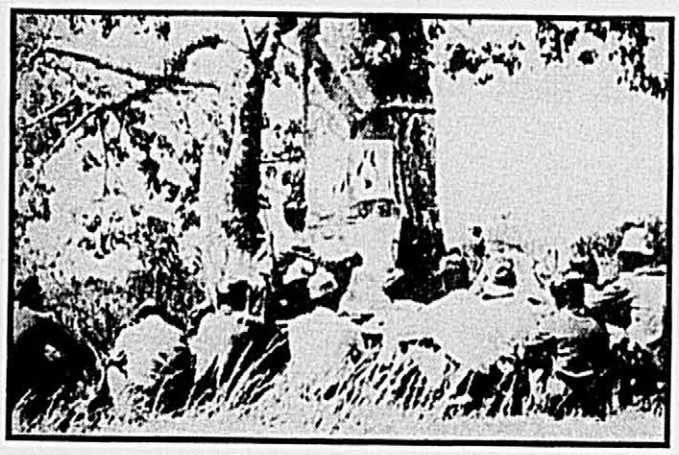
There have been added difficulties due to the critical differences between Mahamane and rival Prime Minister Amadou. One witness said that the president had gone to the national assembly on Saturday to meet his supporters and discuss the possible dissolution of parliament. It was there that he was put under military guard.

*Source: Eye on Africa-Africa Net*

# South Africa — The "rainbow nation" after the storm?

*by Odette M. Boya and Richard O. Segal*





A MONUMENTAL TASK: ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES IS THE INTEGRATION OF THE ANC'S GUERILLA ARMY, UMKHONTO WE SIZWE (RIGHT), AND THE OLD SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY (LEFT), TO FORM A NEW, MULTI-RACIAL NATIONAL ARMY.

Race has long been the pivotal element in the history of South Africa, a country which Archbishop Desmond Tutu referred to as the "rainbow nation".

For centuries, the South African state was designed around concepts of white superiority — despite the struggles of the non-white majorities.

Today, as victory celebrations die down, the administrative work of reorganizing South African society begins. Under the Government of National Unity (GNU) led by Nelson Mandela, F.W. De Klerk and Thabo Mbeki, South Africa has begun dismantling the apartheid system.

Post-apartheid South Africa has become a powerful international symbol, and tributes, plaques and statues to Mandela can be found in many African cities. The country has been allowed a public reentry into the international scene, hosting sports events like the 1996 All Africa Cup of Nations Games and participating in international test cricket after a decades-long ban.

The transfer of power from the pro-apartheid National Party to the new government was surprisingly smooth, with no coup attempts or military movements. But the GNU government — composed of elements of the African National Congress, the National Party and other large South African political organisations — is only temporary.

In 1999 South Africans will choose their government again in a winner-takes-all election. Meanwhile, the GNU is expected to deliver on the promises the African National Congress (ANC) popular liberation movement made before the election.

So far President Mandela has issued three proclamations, granting free lunches for school kids, free medical care for pregnant women and children under the age of six, and instituting the 1994 Land Restitution Act.

But are the political changes just cosmetic or are they the beginnings of a reversal of the apartheid system? And will the coalition government be able to garner the cooperation of enough elements within the rainbow nation to accomplish lasting change?

### LAND FOR *ALL* THE PEOPLE

From 1948 onwards, many South African blacks were forcibly removed from their land during land seizures carried out under the apartheid system. The purpose of the 1994 Land Restitution Act was to redistribute land to displaced blacks.

Mandela aims to redistribute 30 per cent of the country's agricultural land over the next three years. This may difficult considering that whites were promised compensation for any land expropriated from them.

The Land Restitution Act was followed with the more comprehensive Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), which contains elements of rural and urban development.

The RDP's goals include integrating the civil service and restructuring the economy. Developed by the ANC and its allies before the 1994 elections, the RDP will be implemented according to suggestions from the South African populace.

The RDP's rural program is centred around the concepts of productive land use and redistribution. It recognises that women in particular bear the burden of rural poverty. To accomplish its goals, the plan relies on building strong local governments in rural areas.

The urban part of the RDP addresses urban living standards. It aims to create jobs, deracialise cities and alleviate what Mandela describes as the "appalling conditions" of life for many in the city. The plan's success depends on cooperation from the urban communities and the private sector.

The creation of an RDP council sparked criticism from the National Party. An NP member accused the ANC of using the program as a political tool, subverting due process, and expropriating government funding.

The ANC has rejected these criticisms, asserting that the RDP was developed by the South African people before the 1994 elections — and is therefore a grassroots strategy for national action.

Furthermore, they insist that the national council — composed of a large number of progressive organisations — is necessary to ensure representation of the society's different elements.

### NEW FACES IN PARLIAMENT

On other issues there has been a surprising level of parliamentary consensus. Despite South Africa's historic division, all but two laws were passed unanimously in the first six months of legislation.

Since the 1994 elections the face of the South African parliament has changed. For the first time in history the members of the legislature are true representatives of the people. In fact, several parliament members are grass roots activists.

Many of these new members are not trained in formal constitutional processes, and are, in some cases, illiterate. It is expected that as the parliamentary process becomes more accessible, and as its new participants adapt to it, this problem will be solved.

### SOLDIERS AND GUERRILLAS JOIN FORCES

The integration of the military is perhaps the most astounding attempt at revoking the apartheid system. But it is still unclear whether this attempt will become an achievement or an obstacle.

Leader of the notorious South African Defense Force (SADF) General George Meiring must now share command with Joe Modise, former leader of the ANC guerrilla army, Umkhonto We Sizwe.

Together they have turned the SADF into the South African *National* Defense Force. Their task is to integrate 20 000 guerrillas from former liberation movements with 80 000 regulars from the army, navy and air force.

Some of the soldiers claim they would have no problem taking orders from black officers. But some former officers have already admitted that they cannot accept this new reality, and have resigned their posts.

The true difficulty of integrating these fighters reveals itself in the human rights record of the SADF's regular soldiers. Since 1990, there have been 119 politically-related assassinations, many carried out by the SADF.

These sources of animosity may prove difficult or impossible to overcome with the memories of racial hatred and discrimination still fresh in everyone's minds.

Evidence of racism and brutality within the state's law-enforcement structures extends beyond the military. An ANC Human Rights Commission report states that "there are elements within state structures which have no interest in a peaceful advance to genuine democracy". From January to September, 1995, 168 people have died in police custody.

Who will own the economy?

Economic structures lay at the root of the apartheid system. For the transition from apartheid to be successful, the nation's economy must be vastly overhauled.

Some white company owners are trying to change with the times. Henry Hall, owner of a $10 million fruit exporting business in the Western Cape, has converted a third of his holdings into a trust for his 170 workers. This holding will eventually be converted into shares, which are expected to be worth $28 000 by 2004.

However, with little evidence of substantial money changing hands overall, Hall's company seems more the exception than the rule. And a new corporate élite may be emerging as foreign multinationals move in to compete with the local businesses.

Already, multinational corporations have returned to South Africa, and have wasted no time regaining positions of influence in the country's economy.

There has also been a rush for stocks by large financial names like Merrill Lynch, Morgan Grenfell and the Hong Kong Bank. McDonald's is currently involved in a legal battle with local restaurants over trademarks.

### TOWARDS 1999 AND BEYOND...

The difficulties of redistribution and integration are not simple enough to be overcome by the 1999 elections. As long as the transition remains unfinished, South Africans may experience what has been referred to as a "crisis of expectation" in which most of the ANC's liberation promises seem to be mere rhetoric.

It is possible that disillusionment with ANC promises and the interim GNU may slide the nation into race-based allegiance politics, a situation plaguing many of South Africa's neighbors. But despite the difficulties inherent in such a radical social change, the South African people, who initiated the fight against apartheid, are still struggling to form a new nation.

Meanwhile, the international community is witnessing unprecedented co-operation between people attempting to reverse historic injustice.



NELSON MANDELA AT ANC RALLY IN NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

# So often against us, so seldom for us.

## *Being Black and Living with the Canadian Justice System*

*by Esmeralda Thornhill*

Law should be liberatory and emancipatory for everyone. Yet, Black People living within the Canadian Justice System too often have known Law only as a sword of oppression and not as a shield of protection.

Canada's Legal System has not managed to escape the racism permeating Canadian life.

The knowledge of our forefathers' and foremothers' expériences under the heel of the Law helps us to put into proper perspective and to assess our present dealings with the Canadian Justice System.

These multiple streams of consciousness — individual and collective - also help us to understand how Law, both written and unwritten, continues to colour the quality of our participation in Canadian Society.

### LEGAL HISTORY

Canada's legal history is of paramount importance for our people:

• It was Law in 1734 which sanctioned the public execution of Black slave Marie Joseph Angélique for having rebelled and defied the institution of slavery.

• It was Law in 1743 that notarised and authenticated a Bill of the sale of five negroes by businessman Charles Rhéaume to Louis Cureux de St-Germain, a resident of Montréal

• It was Law in 1760 which decreed in the Capitulations of Montréal that Negroes and Native People of both sexes would remain slaves, to their French and Canadian owners.

• It was Law in 1779 which proclaimed that every Black Loyalist coming to Canada would be promised full security to "follow within these lines any occupation which he think proper."

• It was Law in 1806 which sanctioned the public advertisement and sale of a Black woman named Peggy aged 40 years and, her son, Jupiter aged about 15 years - both of them the property of the subscriber.

• It was Law in 1833 which, through the Emancipation proclamation, abolished slavery in Canada.

• It was Law in 1911 which, through petitions and Municipal Council resolutions, opposed Black migration, immigration and settlement in Canada.

• It was Law in 1914 which allowed the Superintendant of Immigration to invoke the "climatic' unsuitability of Blacks and affirm that Black immigration would not be in our best interests.

• It was Law during the two World Wars which discouraged "coloured" recruits from serving in the Armed forces.

• It was Law in the period between the two World Wars which, in multiple Court rulings decreed that the right of a merchant to contract freely with whomever he pleased was of more importance than the right of a Black person to non-discriminatory treatment.

• It was Law in 1954 which allowed the Honourable A. Grantley Adams, Prime Minister of Barbados and visiting Head of State, to be denied a room in a Montréal hotel - because the hotel had "regulations".

• It was Law that allowed a Black, segregated, run-down school near Windsor to exist until its embarrassing discovery in 1964.

• It was Law which allowed in 1976 the emergence of a newly coined phrase "Canadian experience" to circumvent and restrict Black access to the workplace.

In the foregoing examples I have constantly referred to Law. My use of the term Law and our collective understanding of it as Black people, goes beyond the written legislation or published code. More importantly, *Law for us includes those unwritten rules and unspoken codes tacitly understood and entrenched by customary practice.* It is unwritten law that is responsible for giving meaning to or taking meaning away from the rules on the books.

Sharing Black skinship in a majority white society has made us acutely aware of the pivotal role of Law in our lives. It also makes us critically conscious of the distinctions between written and unwritten Law. For, we know that even though slavery as a legal institution was legally abolished by a mere pen stroke, the Legislator's pen did not succeed in obliterating the collective mindset whose social attitudes and practices equated Black-skin with slavery, inferiority, and exploitation.

As a result, an unwritten social consensus emerged then - and persists today - that seems to dictate the "proper place" of Black people. This tacit consensus would appear to determine:

(1) which rights a Black person is entitled to exercise;

(2) how these rights can be exercised.

It is almost as if by some unspoken societal consent, the cloying negativity towards Blackness would persistently link Black skin to "criminalness".

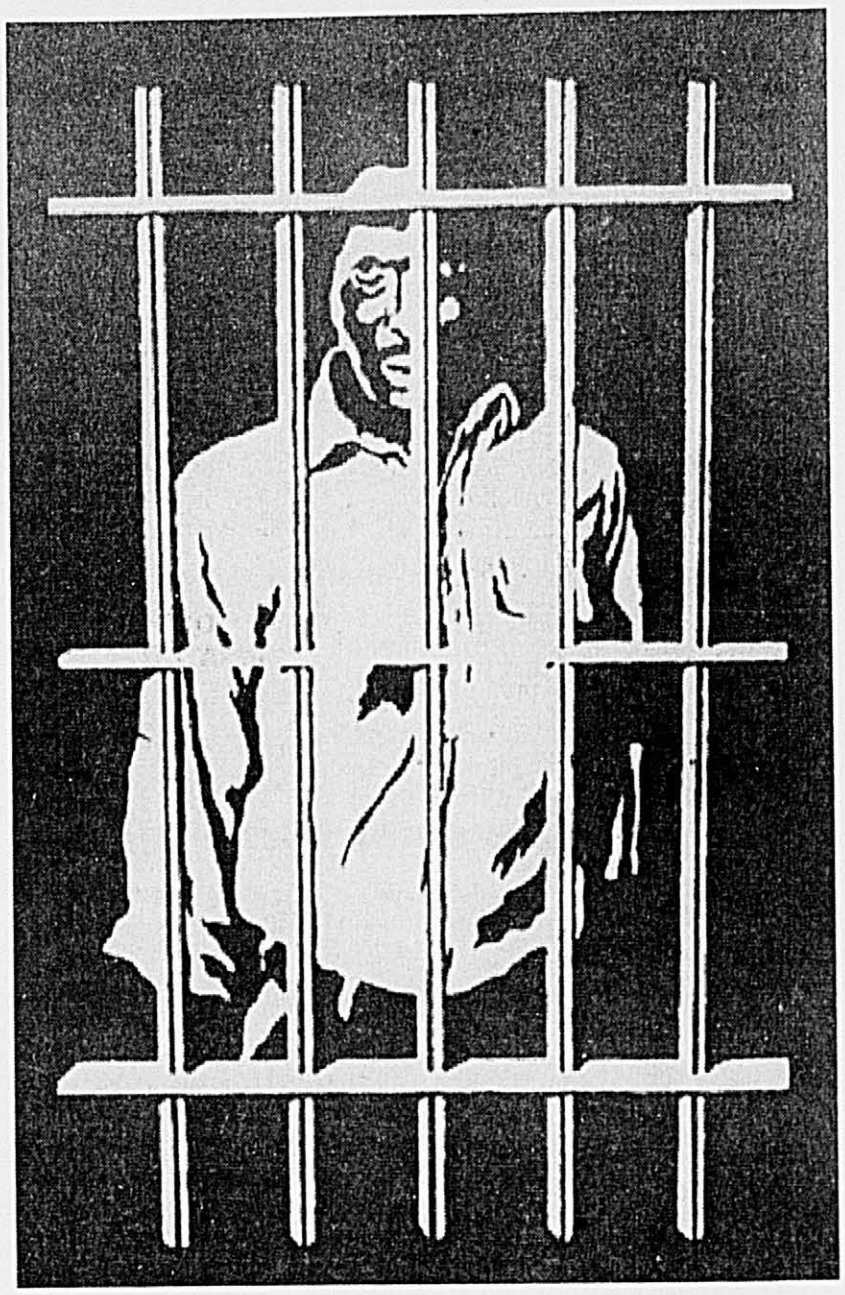
All too frequently, Black skin colour becomes the initiating catalytic factor which jettisons Black people into the Justice System. It is also Black pigmentation that pre-conditions and plots the quality of our trajectory through a System seemingly inimical to our interests.

To Black offenders, the justice System doles out uncommonly harsh punishments; and to Black beneficiaries it grudgingly grants, if not denies, redress or reparation.

Taking a closer look at the Canadian Justice System, the self same conspiracy of silence which envelops the issue of racism in Canadian society is also operating in Canadian Legal Culture.

Just as our 1867 Constitution, the *British North American Act* made no mention of racism or discrimination, nor did our 1982 *Constitutional Charter*, despite specific references to "Canada's multicultural heritage" and "equality"

Government policies of *Multiculturalism* have not yet succeeded in eradicating racism. The Supreme Court of Canada refused as recently as January 1988 to hear a case on racism and police brutality and thus failed to assert the moral leadership that the legal process should assure. *Law teaching* in Universities and Bar Schools is still devoid of any perspectives on Race. *Legal Tools* are also silent on the issue of Race and Racism. Cases still go unpublished.



Since Law historically has chosen not to see racism, today's *Courts* still have not judicially recognised it as a daily Canadian reality.

When damages are accorded, the piffling amounts still make us think of slavery days when a Black man was deemed to be worth only three-fifths of a White man. Why is the leg, arm, or dignity of a White litigant still valued more highly than that of a Black person?

*Juries* still tend to be systematically White - even in cases fraught with racial overtones. Legions of Black men, women and children are continually having their liberty and property taken away. As well as their lives put in jeopardy, by juries, judges and committees from which their peers have been systematically excluded.

*Trade Unions*, where they do exist, still are not committed in their collective agreements to banning racial discrimination from the House of Labour, and vigourously defending their Black members.

Human Rights agencies, Human Rights Commissions, and anti-discriminatory legislation purporting to be a serious expression of government policy of highest priority are still, by and large, placed heavily on the backs of individual Blacks, victims of illegal discrimination.

Law itself will remain a large part of the problem as long as the Canadian Justice System continues obtusely to refuse to see colour. Our Criminal Code already provides penalties for attacks on persons and property.

*The Canadian Criminal Code should be amended to address racism explicitly by creating a distinct and separate infraction for racially motivated attacks on persons and property.*

I started out by saying that law should be emancipatory and liberatory for everyone. We must no longer allow the Black skin we share to be treated as an officially disqualifying disease that makes us invisible when it comes to the benefits of Law and the Canadian Justice System must begin to be accountable to us, Black people.

# STILL FIGHTING FOR AFRICAN STUDIES

## STUDENTS PUSH FOR MORE SUPPORT

*by Rob Sheldon*

Money-obsessed McGill bureaucrats watch out: the students who led the initiative last year to save the African Studies programme are still very much on the move.

In a meeting held last week, The Africana Studies Committee (ASC), a semi-autonomous subcommittee of the Black Students Network (BSN), determined the plan of action following the progress made during the 1994 and 1995 academic year.

Foremost on the long-term agenda is the securing of a response to the 18-page proposal titled *Redefining Our Priorities: Africana Studies and the Future of McGill* submitted last year to the administration.

In that document the ASC requested that the current African Studies programme be expanded to include more broad aspects of African culture off the continent of Africa; hence the name Africana Studies. To anchor the programme, the ASC is pushing McGill to hire a chairperson and has agreed to raise $200 000 toward the cost, if McGill would cover the difference.

When asked if he had seen the proposal, Dean of Arts Carman Miller stated that "I read the proposal they [the ASC] gave me and we discussed it...in a very constructive way. I will bring the request to the Faculty [of Arts] to consider on their list of priorities for privatization."

Miller stated that he did not know how the proposal would be received by the faculty. However, he did bring up a recently signed agreement between the federal government and McGill which could set a hopeful precedent for Africana Studies.

In that agreement, the Department of Canadian Heritage, a Canadian ministry which deals with the promotion of multi-culturalism, donated $400 000 towards the establishment of a Canadian Ethnic Studies chairperson, contingent upon McGill matching and exceeding the amount to meet the mandatory $1 000 000 price tag for a chairperson.

"My point in raising this," he added "is that yes, new things can be done as long as the money comes from the outside."

When asked how she thought the faculty would respond to the proposal, Melanie Newton, Political Coordinator of the BSN and ASC member, commented that "honestly, it's hard to say. On the one hand they received the proposal positively, but on the other hand the administration is remaining blindly committed to reducing its deficit."

### POSITION QUIETLY ELIMINATED

A chairperson is not the only person missing from Africana Studies. Two years ago Professor Aronson left the Anthropology department, and his three African-related courses untaught.

Despite the fact that his absence may mean that there are not enough African-content courses for a major degree, McGill has yet to hire a replacement. Furthermore, the university will not guarantee that a new professor, if one is hired, will be an Africanist.

During an interview with Professor Myron Echenberg, Coordinator for Africana Studies, he stated in response to the Aronson affair that "I am disappointed that we have not gotten the replacement. This could have been done before the financial crunch became so severe."

He is confident, however, that when the position is filled it will be by an individual with African background, and possibly by someone already at McGill. "I think as things progressed it became clear that a person with African research background would be hired. There are some very good people [within McGill] who have been hired as professionals to teach some of that [African-related] material. I would think that they would be very strong candidates."

Odette Boya, a member of the ASC, agreed, "...a lot of anthropology professors I have, do focus on that area of the world. They've done research there. I know personally of three or so who are qualified."

But when asked why Aronson's slot had not yet been filled, Dean Miller stated matter-of-factly that "the acting Dean [Harold Waller] made the decision last year to cut the base slot from the budget of the Department of Anthropology. It [Aronson's position] was abolished."



MEMBERS OF THE AFRICANA STUDIES COMMITTEE: KONI BENSON, MELANIE NEWTON, TERNA GYUSE AND IRA SALMAN. NOT PICTURED ARE ODETTE BOYA, RICHARD SEGAL AND LEIGH MACRAE.

DAILY PHOTO BY DAVE ARTHER

And in response to the question of why the coordinator of Africana Studies and the ASC were not informed of this decision, he stated simply that "I have no idea."

When contacted a second time to comment on the Aronson developments, it was obvious that the news came as a rude shock to both the ASC and Myron Echenberg.

Echenberg responded by saying, "It's really unfortunate that appointment didn't go forward."

Newton, equally surprised, expressed that "in the face of such great student desire to keep this open, the Dean shouldn't be able to just make that kind of top-down, non-consultational decision. It was...rather authoritarian ...on the part of Dean Waller.

"This only reinforces our conviction in the things we're asking for, like the chair. If the programme had a chair these sorts of things might not happen. I don't understand why we weren't informed," Newton continued.

With McGill's cutting of Aronson's three vital courses and with its request for a chairperson sitting unsteadily on the table of the Faculty, the ASC must urgently ask: will Africana Studies be on the agenda for Shapiro's "New McGill?"

> *"I want students to know that we need their support, that it's [the African Studies programme] alive because of them." — Melanie Newton, Political Coordinator of the Black Students' Network*

### THE ASC: MOBILISING A COMMUNITY

The ASC is not planning on leaving the answer to that question up to any powers that be. Rather, the group is asserting their power to put themselves squarely on Shapiro's agenda.

This semester the ASC will be sending its message to the entire Montréal community.

The group has secured a half-hour segment on CKUT's Black Talk Radio, scheduled for February 17. The ASC's time will be part of a sixteen-hour broadcast put forth by the black community in Montréal and will be devoted to a discussion of Africana Studies at McGill.

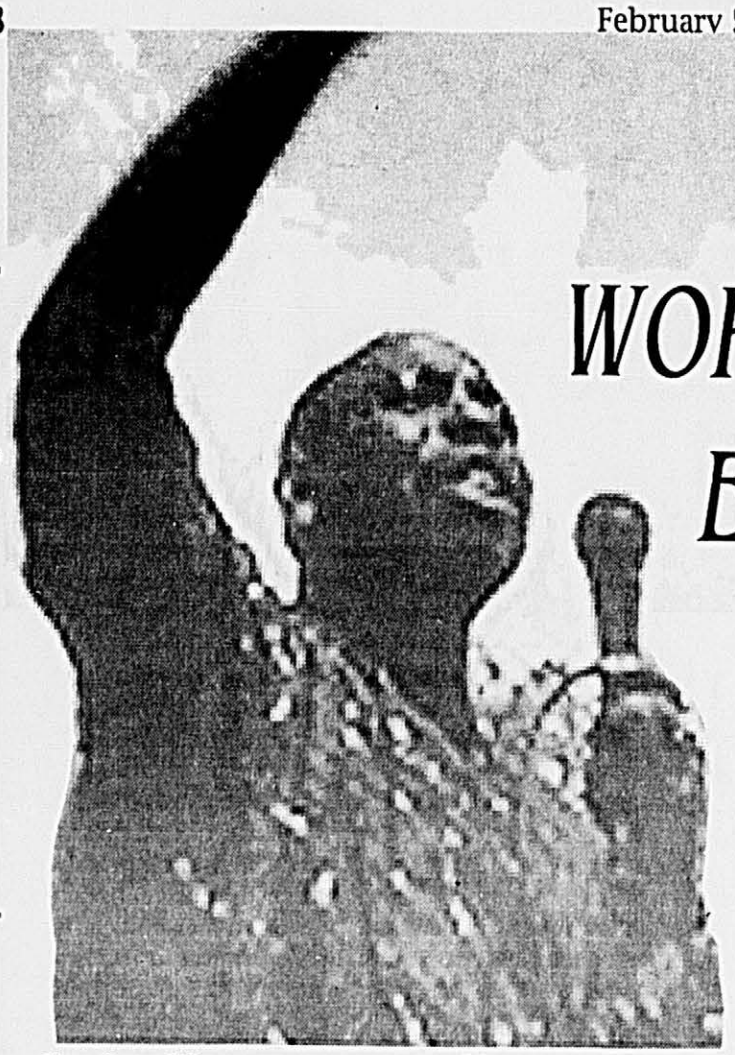
Melanie Newton stated that the specific topic will be "how members of the community both on campus and off can get involved." She added, "by then we hope to have a response from McGill."

Further outreach will include an open forum to be held this semester examining the Africana Studies situation. In addition, a letter campaign sponsored by the Coalition of the Black Community, a recently formed Montréal organisation, will be directed at the McGill administration.

Also planned is a sheet to be distributed to advisors the aim of which will be to let incoming students know that Africana Studies, despite McGill's relentless budget slashing, exists as a major and minor degree.

When asked what message she most wanted heard, Newton responded by saying, "I want students to know that we need their support, that it's [the African Studies programme] alive because of them."

Africana Studies certainly has many battles left to fight; however in looking at the past and the planned future of the ASC it is apparent that not only is Africana Studies alive — it's alive and kicking.



KEN SARO-WIWA, LEADER FOR THE MOVEMENT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF OGOUI PEOPLE WAS EXECUTED BY THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT LAST NOVEMBER.

## "WE STAND BEFORE HISTORY"

# WORKING TOGETHER FOR AN END TO MILITARY RULE IN NIGERIA

*by Terna Gyuse and David Austin*

Nigeria has been in the headlines since last November when its military government executed nine human rights and environmental activists after a farcical trial. The executions finally brought the reality of Nigeria's repressive political climate to international attention.

The activists, one of whom was renowned writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, were vocal opponents of military repression in the Ogoni region of eastern Nigeria, where international oil companies have been drilling for oil since 1958.

The military governments which have ruled Nigeria for much of the time since 1966 have increasingly relied on revenue from the oil industry. Since 1970 successive governments have struck lucrative profit-sharing deals with oil companies, like Shell, which exploit Nigeria's oil reserves.

In June 1993, the military government annulled national elections, which would have returned the country to civilian rule, without explanation.

Babangida was replaced in 1993 by General Sani Abacha, who intends to stay in power for at least another three years.

Dr. Olisa Agbakoba, a leading member of Nigeria's Civil Liberties' Organisation, was in Montréal two weeks ago, along with Nigerian writer and Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka. Both were here to continue mobilising international efforts to overthrow the Nigerian military.

[O]ne of the things that NGOs [and] the Nigerian community can do in Canada or elsewhere is to ensure... that Nigeria remains on the front burner, ensure that it effects the foreign policy of every country.

***Daily: What is it like now in Nigeria?***

Dr. Agbakoba: A friend of mine described Nigeria as one of the few countries where you can be at once in the First World and the Third. In fact, you can come out of the door of a business man, and bang! outside, you're in the Third World.

An average Nigerian family would be... say, a man, a woman and three children. The kids have to go to school. The wife would probably be a petty trader. The man would earn say 600 naira [Nigerian currency]. His rent would be 1 000 naira a month. Then food, school fees, health care... that tells you he cannot cope. So there's a gap in his income. How does he make it up? Corrupt practices.

People... look to other opportunities [besides their jobs] to augment their incomes. And that is possible because of the huge volumes of cash that flow into the country.

The problem that people describe as ethnicity is not, in my opinion, as horrendous as we portray it. I think it's more [that t]he Nigerian élite has found a process by which they use religion and ethnicity to divide the people.

That is the danger of [focusing on] the ethnic question. If you were to take a referendum and you asked the common people, "What is your main problem?" they're not going to mention ethnicity. They're going to say they're poor.

***At an earlier meeting, you talked about how corruption has "damaged the soul of the Nigerian", making it near-impossible to organise large-scale action. How do you plan to overcome this?***

The government is able to survive because it has access to a vast array of resources, something like a $100 million dollars a day.

So what we think is important is to cut the funding source. And here I turn to the role that the international community can play. If it were possible to have a comprehensive set of sanctions at a multilateral and bilateral level then increasingly we would be seeing a shrinking of the financial resources available to the government.

Sanctions will kill off the informal sector and give Nigerians a clear choice about what they need to be doing. [T]hen some sort of instability would arise and people would now have a choice to get on the bandwagon and follow the crusade for a return to democracy....

We think that if the Nigerian government is starved of finance, there'll be little left but for all of us to join the crusade.

***It almost sounds as if you expect sanctions to wake Nigerians up, to force them to take action. Many people have recently drawn parallels between the anti-apartheid struggle and what's taking shape in Nigeria. But my impression is that in South Africa, the ANC and others were well-established on the ground before sanctions were imposed to help the struggle.***



GENERAL SANI ABASHA, THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF MILITARY DICTATORS.

You're wrong. Absolutely wrong. In South Africa, people had no choice. [F]rom the 50s on through the 60s, the ANC was practically dead. It was the Black Consciousness movement generated by Steve Biko that revived the process, and then international support came in.

When the ANC established forward bases, it used those bases to create sufficient civil disobedience within South Africa to hurt the state. We haven't quite gotten to that stage.

It is interesting to note that a spate of bombing attempts has begun. The son of the president, I'm sure you know, was killed in a plane crash. There was a bombing in the international airport in Kano, there was a bombing in a hotel in Kaduna. So these are very worrying trends. It... depicts the level of frustration.

At this particular time. I do not agree with extra-constitutional methods. I think there's enough space to pursue constitutional processes to get change. But if constitutional processes do not produce the results, then you might be seeing a number of liberation movements blowing up planes in the air.

***Speaking of civil disobedience, two years ago, there was a massive strike which paralysed Nigeria for weeks. But then suddenly it was broken. What happened?***

There's no money. One of the reasons why the strike failed — and you refer to the strike called by the oil workers' unions that was effective for six weeks — was that... [f]or a strike to succeed, you need a strike fund. Because at the end of the day, the people you're asking to stay away from work have their own responsibilities. But [the unions] didn't have a strike fund so slowly people began to drift back to work.

[W]hat is now needed is a new, and more organised process by which strikes and other forms of civil disobedience can be sustained. Again, it comes back to the question of inadequate capacity on the part of the local opposition.

In June 1993 when Chief Abiola's election was annulled and the leading members of the human rights movement were

**Coniinued on page 20**

*The American legal system on trial: the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal*

# And justice for all

*by Meredith Cohen*



Justice is something we would all like to think exists, not merely in theory, but in practice as well.

Unfortunately, the pending case of Mumia Abu-Jamal — who has now been on death row for 14 years for a crime he probably did not commit — is a glaring example of how justice is an illusion in the United States.

As dxtr, a member and organiser of Montréal Friends of Mumia and Activist/Outreach, states, "Mumia's case is an example of an oppressive authoritarian system that thinks incarceration is an acceptable form of political control."

"[Mumia's case exposes a system] that uses race to divide and exploit and silence the voice of revolution," he continues.

"The state uses Mumia as an exemplary statistic to show what happens to the voice of dissent when it speaks out, and that this sort of opposition is not to be tolerated," dxtr adds.

### WHILE MOST KIDS WERE STILL ON THE PLAY-GROUND...

When Mumia was a 13 year old Philadelphia youth, he was instrumental in starting a Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panthers. By the age of 14, he had already become the subject of FBI surveillance.

As he grew, he became a loud, eloquent voice in the black community. As a student journalist, and later a freelance journalist he was a threat to local authorities, as he spoke out against police brutality and institutionalised racism.

But it was an event that occurred in the small hours of the morning of December 9, 1981 that sealed his current fate.

On that morning, at around 4 am, Mumia was driving home from work in his taxi cab when he came across his brother being beaten by a police officer. Mumia naturally went to his brother's defense.

When police back-up arrived, Mumia's brother had vanished from the scene, and police officer Daniel Faulkner and Mumia were both left in pools of blood. Mumia's .38 caliber pistol was found at the scene. An hour later, officer Faulkner was pronounced dead, having been shot in the back and face.

At the same hospital, Jefferson University, Mumia underwent surgery to remove a bullet from Faulkner's weapon that entered his chest and was lodged in his spine.

He was then charged with first degree murder.

### INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY

The prosecution alleged that Mumia first shot officer Faulkner in the back, and after taking a bullet in his own chest, shot Faulkner fatally in the face.

The case was brought to trial in early 1982, and was heard by the notorious Judge Albert Sabo, who has handed down more death sentences than any other Philadelphia judge.

If the trial circumstances seem suspicious, it is nothing compared to a closer examination of the evidence used to convict Mumia.

The fatal gun blow to Faulkner's face was concluded by medical examiners to be from a .44 caliber gun, not a .38. In addition to that, surrounding the immediate crime, the police department made no attempt to have Mumia's weapon tested by a ballistic specialist to ascertain whether it had been fired that morning.

The contradictions go on and on — making the trial seem increasingly absurd.

Two witnesses who claimed that while in the hospital Mumia confessed his guilt (while obviously in a stupor — spinal injury will do that to a person), turned out to be an officer and security guard who were both friends of the deceased officer. Even the hospital log report maintained that "the Negro made no statements".

In addition, the prosecution's case insists that Mumia was shot by Officer Faulkner while he stood over the prostrate policeman. This is completely inconsistent with the findings of pathologists, who conclude that Mumia's chest wound was inflicted at a *downward* trajectory.

Beyond the absurdity, Mumia was found guilty and has been in prison since 1983.

He was sentenced to die on August 17, 1995, but due to overwhelming national and international protest, from Philadelphia to Berlin, Sabo granted Mumia an indefinite stay of execution.

On February 9, attorney Leonard Wineglass and the rest of Mumia's legal team will be filing an appeal that Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham will have a month to review.

If the appeal goes through, the case will be heard in the Philadelphia Supreme Court. If the previous verdict is upheld, an appeal can be made to the Federal Supreme Court.

According to Bob Nelson, a member of Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), "Mumia could possibly be held until next election and can be a political weapon by the state to demoralize activists and keep their culminated efforts focused on one cause, while there are so many other cases that need attention from activists."

On the other hand, according to dxtr, Mumia could be a forceful symbol. "He is a symbol for activists as well, and shows the government that activists have real power," says dxtr.

Mumia's lawyer, Wineglass, states that Mumia's indefinite stay of execution was due to the efforts of "the tens of thousands of people around the world that supported Mumia."

As dxtr explains, "Activism is about keeping the pressure applied, and with the twentieth year of Leonard Peltier's incarceration approaching and the advances in Mumia's trial, I expect to see more solidarity and strength."

He adds, "It is called the justice system, but there is no justice, it is more like a weather vane. It is often about who has the most corporate backing, the most money, the most guns, or who is screaming the loudest."

*If you would like to get involved in the battle to save Mumia's life, please contact the Coalition to save Mumia Abu-Jamal: c/o Alternative Bookshop, 2035 Boul. St. Laurent; Montréal; 844-3207 or 596-7094.*
*Or write directly to Mumia Abu-Jamal at AM 8335, SCI Green, 1030 E. Roy Furman; Waynesboro, PA 15370, USA.*
*You could also write to Governor Tom Ridge: Main Capital Building, Room 225; Harrisburg, PA 17120, USA.*
*Make him understand that you will not allow Mumia to be assassinated.*

## *Please photocopy this letter and send it ASAP*

Open letter to Attorney General Janet Reno

Dear Attorney General Reno:

I am aware that you have received thousands of messages —including those from 35 congressional representatives, the N.A.A.C.P., and the National Rainbow Coalition — urging the Justice Department to intervene in the case of Mumia Abu Jamal. The call for the Justice Department to take action persisted, even after the stay of execution was granted to Mr. Abu Jamal, and became more specifically directed at asking for a comprehensive civil rights investigation.

Your response has been that while the Justice Department has the statutory authority to investigate state court proceedings, and where civil rights violations have occurred to prosecute the parties responsible for those violations, there is a five year statute of limitations in both cases—UNLESS THERE IS SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE OF AN ONGOING CONSPIRACY.

Yes, Mumia Abu Jamal's trial occurred in 1982, eight years beyond the statute of limitations. But there is indeed significant evidence of an ongoing conspiracy to deny Mr. Abu Jamal his human and civil rights and to assure that he be executed regardless of his innocence. To cite just one recent example of that conspiracy, Mumia Abu Jamal was denied his right to communicate with his attorney in confidentiality. Confidential legal notes were duplicated and presented to the Governor of Pennsylvania, Tom Ridge, the very person who had signed Mr. Abu Jamal's death warrant on June 1.. Further documentation on that ongoing conspiracy will be presented to you.

I join with thousands of others, once again, to urge you to conduct a comprehensive Civil Rights investigation to examine all the ways in which there has been and CONTINUES TO BE a conspiracy on the part of the State of Pennsylvania, from its executive to its judicial branches, to silence Mumia Abu Jamal once and for all.

In light of this conspiracy, we request that all Philadelphia police files pertaining to Mumia Abu Jamal, including those on police officer Daniel Faulkner be disclosed. A Justice Department civil rights investigation could make a significant contribution toward guaranteeing the new trial that Mumia Abu Jamal must have.

Yours Truly,

Name and Address

All signed letters will be delivered by the coalition. Please return by May 5,1996 to: Million Letters for Mumia: c/o Free Mumia Abu Jamal Coalition: P.O. Box 650 New York, NY 10009. Any questions call us at: 212-330-8029

# WORKING FOR AN END TO MILITARY RULE IN NIGERIA

**Continued from page 18**

put in jail — people like Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana, and the irrepressible Gani Fawehinmi — it fell on me to lead the campaign for democracy. I led the campaign with exactly 240 000 naira and 10 people.

That was all we had to immobilise Lagos [a city of at least 8 million]. So when some jerk sits out in London and asks me over the BBC, "Why can't your demonstrations spread?", I ask him, "Do you know how much resources I have?"

The local opposition is extremely small and extremely weak. So here you are with a very small opposition fighting a huge government establishment that uses everything and stops at nothing.

***Was the recent conference of human rights groups in Nigeria a step towards better organisation?***

The first reason for the meeting was to synthesise the various strategies of the pro-democracy groups in Nigeria. We thought it was time to take collective action, to draw up a common programme [for] more effective action against the government.

We also thought it was time to get away from report writing and seminars and meetings and to develop a set of practical actions around issues like rallies, demonstration, leafleteering — things that the government would feel.

We also agreed that it was necessary for the campaign for June 12 to expand beyond the south. [O]ver the last 3 years the campaign has not really grown out of the southwest. And if that campaign is to be successful, we feel that it is important that the entire country be carried along.

***Returning to the role of the international community, how would you evaluate the actions of the Canadian government so far?***

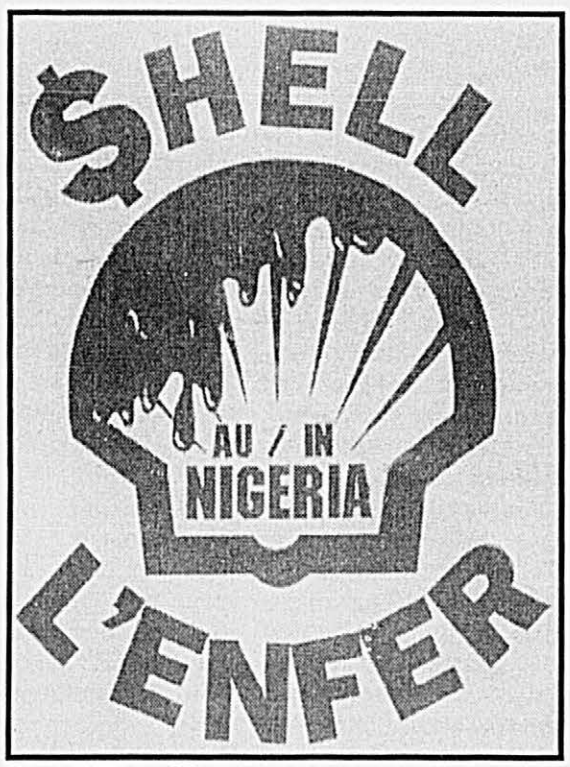
Very good, I think. Very good. [At last year's Commonwealth summit] in Auckland, the Canadian prime minister was the only one who mentioned the key matter of the day, precisely and to the point.

That was the issue of Ken Saro-Wiwa [an Ogoni environmental activist executed with eight others on November 10]. And since then we've seen a very articulate foreign policy position from the Canadian government.

Also, back home, the Canadian High Commissioner has been very supportive of our work. So on the whole it's been quite satisfactory.

We've also seen situations in which some Canadian councils, notably the Toronto Metro Council was prepared to consider the possibilities of sanctions against Nigeria, in the form of disallowing Shell from importing crude oil from Nigeria. [Late last year, Metro Council first canceled a $1.2 million contract with Shell to supply the city with gas then amended the contract to include a clause stipulating that the petroleum supplied not come from Nigeria.]

Now if that were to replicate itself across Canada, and people began to boycott [Shell] products, I think that would be a very good symbol of what could happen elsewhere..




SINCE 1970 THE NIGERIAN MILITARY HAS HAD A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES.

***What can individuals or NGOs here in Canada do?***

There are many things they can do. One is to keep the whole issue on the front burner... [W]hile it's true that Ken's execution has put Nigeria on the front burner, it's very easy for that to slip away.

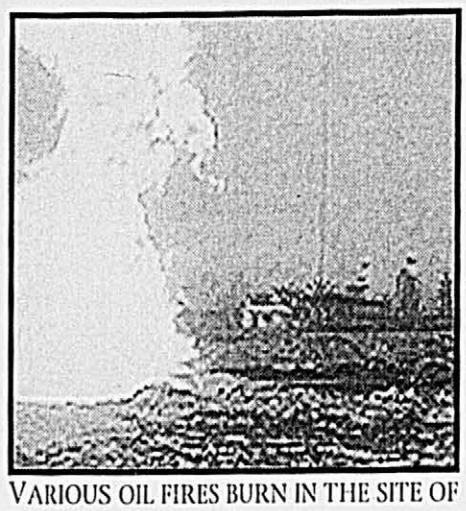
So one of the things that NGOs [and] the Nigerian community can do in Canada or elsewhere is to ensure... that Nigeria remains on the front burner, ensure that it effects the foreign policy of every country. That, I think, is the critical role they need to fill.

The results of the interest in Nigeria may begin to show in the months to come. The problem is that the time isn't there. It is extremely urgent.

I detect in Abacha a renewed vigor to pull out of this crisis. He was badly hit by the events of November 11, when Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth and there was so much confusion at the highest levels of the government.

But they've since survived that — it's like they've bottomed out of the crisis and he has begun to plan, he has begun to think. He's begun to move his thoughts into the former Eastern Bloc. He's making new alliances with China, with Poland, with Russia.

Now if these new alliances replace Western interests in Nigeria, then I think we're going to be seeing in a very short while a *complete* clamp down on pro-democracy and human rights groups. Then we will move to the Zairian formula where there will be a completely totalitarian state.



VARIOUS OIL FIRES BURN IN THE SITE OF SHELL PROJECTS IN OGINILAND.

I am emphasising the role of the international community because I've been on the ground, I've been in this for a decade and I've seen all aspects of strategies put in place and I know that the only way that the thing will begin to roll and be effective is if the international community assists the capacity on the ground.

All the examples where dictatorships have been overthrown have come from some sort of bilateral cooperation from abroad with the local opposition. Do you think for instance that Haiti would have achieved its democracy without the assistance of the Americans? I don't think so. So that is the role that the international community must be prepared to play.

*If you are interested in getting involved in the struggle against the Nigerian military and in organising international pressure against foreign companies collaborating with the Nigerian military the Concerned Groups for Democratic Change in Nigeria at 735-7074.*

# THE CONCEPT OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

*Comment by Mellissa Campbell*

Once again, we find our selves beginning yet another Black History Month. We have come together for an entire 28 days — pardon me, 29 this year — to celebrate the rich history of Black people, and to expose ourselves, and other communities, to this history.

It is argued that Black History month is not only warranted but is absolutely necessary in a society that continues to be plagued with endemic racism. One of its primary objectives is to increase the level of awareness amongst those who are ignorant of what Black history truly is.

Hopefully, this increased exposure will facilitate the improvement of race relations within our society. The question we must ask ourselves in February 1996 is whether or not Black History Month in its current form and given its past record, can accomplish this goal.

Unfortunately, what Black History Month often becomes is a bombardment of information and a race to disseminate facts in all of twenty-eight days.

It provides a "snapshot" of history; of peoples; and of cultures. Yet, if Black History Month is to curb the degree of intolerance within our society through exposure, it must do so via a systematic and in-depth challenge of the status quo and views of HIS-story.

In reality this can not be accomplished in such a short period of time. For exposure to be transformative of society, the richness and depth of Black history can not artificially be made to fit neatly into one month. In other words, the snapshots" are simply insufficient.

Another problem with the superficial exposure of a single "Black History Month" is that it may provide a false sense of knowledge to the truly misinformed.



PAINTING BY LYONEL LAURENCEAU

Given the time constraints of this event, usually, the same basic historical facts are recycled year after year. The unexposed observer may mistake this skeletal frame of facts as constituting all of what Black history entails.

This scenario is extremely problematic because such people remain oblivious to what really constitutes Black history. They may never know of Dubois, Nanny, Shaka, Anta Diop, etc yet, with their snapshots in hand, they walk away feeling as though they know it all.

Furthermore, this superficial exposure has the potential to generate intolerance as opposed to greater tolerance. True appreciation and respect of Black culture is predicated on a genuine understanding of Black History. How can such an understanding be generated if people are only given a limited amount of facts in a limited amount of time?

One is left to ponder the concept of a "Black History Month". Are you, for example, aware and content with only having snapshots of a history that begins with the origins of the human species?

Are you amongst those, who, despite possessing a handful of facts, believe themselves to be well-informed and knowledgeable of Black history?

Hopefully, people will see the inherent contradiction in the term "Black History Month" and commit themselves to moving beyond sparse and superficial readings of history.

Ideally, this commitment to educating oneself will carry over throughout the year. It should not only be confined to the upcoming twenty-nine days.

Now is the time and now is the hour. There is only one way out of our difficulties, and that is to organise and move. Although it has been asserted by our so-called benefactors that we should take what we get and be satisfied, I maintain as Aggrey did that we should not be satisfied with taking what we get or what has been given to us but to use what have been given to gain what we ought to have. *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 30/4/1938.

# A WORKING CLASS HERO REMEMBERED

## SIERRA LEONE'S I.T.A. WALLACE-JOHNSON

*by Ismail Rashid*

Although these poignant words were penned in 1938, they still retain forceful relevance for Africans and the African continent over fifty years later. Isaac Theophilus Akunna Wallace-Johnson — the author of these words — was an outstanding trade unionist, journalist, Pan-Africanist and poet.

Born on February 6, 1895, in Wilberforce village, Sierra Leone, I.T.A Wallace-Johnson was the child of a Krio farmer father and a fishmonger mother.

His family's position on the lower rungs of Krio society conditioned his sensitivity to the sufferings of compatriots and the devotion with which he fought for their interests under British Colonial rule.

During seven decades of life in three African nations, Wallace-Johnson remained faithful to his inter-twined goals of justice for working people in Africa, freedom from imperial rule and Pan-Africanism. He was also continually attacked for his beliefs, not only from imperial officials, but elites within Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

### AN ORGANISER OF WORKERS

After leaving school in 1913 Wallace-Johnson immediately joined the Customs Department in Sierra Leone as a clerk. He found workers in the department poorly paid and badly treated, so he organised them into a union to agitate for better pay and favourable conditions of service.

Unwilling to redress the workers' grievances or tolerate those who informed them of their rights, the colonial officials in the Customs department dismissed Wallace-Johnson.

Wallace-Johnson eventually found work as a seaman. His exposure to the plight of workers in different countries affected his political views. In 1929 he worked in Ghana and Nigeria, and along with Frank Macauley helped organise the Nigerian Workers Union (NWU). His labour militancy, as well as his frequent writings for the *Negro Worker* newspaper, sufficiently inflamed the British authorities, who had him deported in 1933. He made his way to Ghana to continue his union activities.

### LIBERTY OR DEATH IN ACCRA

As in Nigeria, Wallace-Johnson used his time in Ghana to help the labouring classes build their own unions and demand better conditions.

Wallace-Johnson also helped build Ghana's first effective mass-oriented political movement while in the colony. Working with Nnamdi Azikiwe he launched the West African Youth League (WAYL), Gold Coast Section. The motto of the league was "liberty or death" and incorporated socialist as well as Pan-Africanist ideas. Its clarion call to the masses was freedom from colonial rule.

In establishing the League, Wallace-Johnson aimed at creating a Pan-African organisation, He wanted to include French-colonised as well as Portuguese-colonised Africa. In outlook, the league was anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and pro-African liberation.

As in Nigeria, Wallace-Johnson's activities quickly attracted the attention of British colonial authorities, who began to look for a way to stifle his work.

*The motto of the West African Youth League was "liberty or death" and incorporated socialist as well as Pan-Africanist ideas. Its clarion call to the masses was freedom from colonial rule.*

The opportunity presented itself when Wallace-Johnson wrote an article, "Has the African a God" in the Ghanain newspaper, *African Morning Post*. Written under the pseudonym "Effective", the article was highly critical of British colonial ideology and administration.

Again, Wallace-Johnson was arrested, fraudulently tried and deported.

When he arrived in Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone in 1938, he found the condition of the masses so appalling that he decided they should quickly be organised to work for their improvement and freedom from colonial rule.

### LEPPIT DON CAM NA TOGN

Wallace-Johnson quickly began to replicate in Sierra Leone, the work he did in Ghana. He established the WAYL in Sierra Leone, founded trade unions and started the *African Standard* newspaper.

Within a short space of time, the league contested the city council elections. Wallace-Johnson demonstrated without doubt that "Leppit Don Cam Na Togn [The Leopard is in town]."

The League was the first mass movement in Sierra Leone. Unlike earlier organisations, its membership was open to all in the society. It appealed to all Sierra Leoneans, regardless of their background, social status, religion, ethnicity or gender.

For the first time in the history of Sierra Leone, a movement had emerged which called for unity among all groups in the society; a movement which bonded its members together by advising them to call each other "comrade". The popularity of the league was such that at its height, it claimed over 40 000 members in Freetown and the provinces.

The League felt leadership must be popular and it must come out of the oppressed masses. It believed leadership must be drawn from the people, it must represent their interests, and it must be supported by them.

By putting this broad-based philosophy to use, the League decisively won the Freetown City Council elections in 1938, and made Constance Cummings-John the first elected woman official and subsequently, the first female Mayor of Freetown.

The effectiveness of the League's mass strategy created fear among the colonial government and its local supporters. These supporters, fearful of popular participation in politics, were willing to sacrifice the generations of struggles and the gains made by people of Sierra Leone for their personal survival. They supported the colonial regime in passing repressive laws against the WAYL and Wallace-Johnson.

As a consequence, Wallace-Johnson was arrested on a trumped-up libel charge, tried and illegally convicted. Although he was to be sentenced to jail for only a year, the British detained him for over four years, from 1939 to 1944. Bankole Bright, a local lawyer and politician strongly supported the British measures.

The detention of Wallace-Johnson and the subsequent harassment of some of the key leaders of the WAYL, weakened the organisation. These events set back development of national consciousness and the independence struggle in Sierra Leone.

After his release in 1944, Wallace-Johnson remained active in politics and journalism. He attended the historic Fifth Pan-African Conference in Manchester in 1945 where "positive action" was adopted as a strategy for African liberation.

Though his West African Youth League was never able to recapture the dynamism and popularity that it had in the late 1930s, Wallace-Johnson remained firmly committed to struggle of the working people in Africa.

Wallace-Johnson became, and remained a member of parliament for the Wilberforce riding in the Sierra Leone Parliament until his death in a mysterious car crash in Ghana in 1965.

### A HERO FOR ALL TIMES

A century after his birth, and thirty years after his death, the life and struggle of Wallace-Johnson still retains immense significance and poignancy for Sierra Leone and Africa.

For the poor and oppressed of that country and continent, Wallace-Johnson remains a hero for all times, for he prosecuted their cause with a vigour hitherto unknown in Sierra Leone and West Africa. In seeking justice and recompense for the oppressed and toiling masses, he demonstrated an unflagging and unrelenting spirit.

*In seeking justice and recompense for the oppressed and toiling masses, he demonstrated an unflagging and unrelenting spirit.*

For close to five years now, Sierra Leone has been mired in civil war. Yet, in spite of his radicalism and militancy, Wallace-Johnson never advocated violence nor utilised it. He believed that the masses sufficiently mobilised would defeat any oppressive force. His guns were his pen and typewriter, the people were his tanks and armoured cars. The halls, market places, conferences and parliament were his battle-fields. He never lost faith in the masses. In short, he was a democrat, an example to this generation of African leaders.



# Big Brothers for Black boys

## *The Black Star Project one year later*

*by Bryan Bishop*



It's been over one year since nine-year-old David (not his real name) was first matched with his Big Brother through the Black Star Big Brother Project.

During that time they spent homes, cooking special dishes together, going to movies, visiting arcades or sometimes just plain 'hanging out'. The impact of the relationship has made a significant difference in David's school performance and interpersonal relationships.

The Black Star Big Brother Project was launched in May 1994 at the CLSC NDG/Mtl. in response to a survey which identified Black adolescents as being one of the groups in need . More specifically, Black Star is a community-based response to the disproportionate numbers of Black youth in Montreal who find themselves in the social welfare system, juvenile detention centres. Black youth in Quebec also have a higher-than-average high school drop out rate.

The project seeks to recruit adult, Black males to be friends and role models to Black boys between the ages of 8-14 who come from female-headed single parent families and who have no positive male role models in their lives.

The idea is for the adult volunteers to spend three to four hours per week with the young boy participating together in activities, such as throwing a Frisbee taking a walk in the park, washing a car, grocery shopping, or just showing the young person where you work or go to school.

Through these activities it is hoped that the Little Brother will develop a friendly, trusting relationship with his Big Brother. Black Star is now functioning as an independent organization So far, the project een boys and men with extremely good results. These results are consistent with studies conducted about Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs both in the United States and Canada which show improved self esteem, improved family relationships, and improved school attendance and academic performance for "Little Sisters/Brothers" in the program. One Ontario study in 1994 indicated that there was approximately a 20 per cent increase in high school graduation rates above the general population for boys and girls involved in a Big Brother/Big Sister program.

The project has had tremendous community support, including an endorsement from Felipe Alou, manager of the Montréal Expos Baseball club, and an honourary Black Star.

The concept of Big Brothering is certainly not foreign to members of the Black community who understand that it takes a whole community to raise a child.

*More information about The Black Star Project can be obtained by attending an information session at 5117 de Maisonneuve (Metro Vendôme) on Thursday February 8th at 18h. The information session is part of the project team 's commitment to educating the wider community about the project's aims and objectives, and the procedures involved in becoming both a Little and Big Star. For more details call Black Star at 485-9737.*

# UNE HISTOIRE PARMI TANT D'AUTRES

*de Hans Didier Mayetela*

Samedi, 13 janvier 19 h 40, ma soeur, jeune fille noire arriva à Montréal en provenance de Paris où elle avait été passer le congé de Noël. Cette jeune canadienne rentrait chez elle, mais pour son malheur, elle n'était pas de la bonne couleur. Ce jour-là, comme la plupart du temps d'ailleurs, les passagers de race noire ont été obligatoirement fouillés. Ma soeur dira elle-même plus tard: "J'ai remarqué que le chemin qui menait à la salle de fouille était emprunté par un grand nombre de passagers noirs, pour ne pas dire par tous les passagers noirs". Sa phrase m'a singulièrement rappelé certains passages du roman "Racines" d'Alex Haley. On aurait tendance à dire que les événements décrits dans ce roman datent heureusement d'une époque révolue, mais attendez de lire la suite de l'histoire pour juger de l'évolution réelle des choses. Par la suite, on a procédé à la fouille de ses valises ainsi qu'à celle d'un homme de race blanche. Dans les bagages de ma soeur se du poulet fumé alors que dans ceux du voyageur de race blanche, on retrouvait des boîtes de sardine et du saucisson à l'ail. Le poulet et le saucisson de ma soeur lui ont été automatiquement confisqués tandis que l'on a permis au passager blanc de partir avec son saucisson et ses boîtes de sardine . Mais les malheurs de ma soeur ne se sont pas arrêtés là. Lorsqu'elle rouspéta devant cette injustice, l'agent qui lui avait confisqué ses biens la menaça de lui saisir ses chaussures et un sac se trouvant dans la valise. Les chaussures et le sac faits d'un cuir que l'on retrouve dans la plupart des magasins de Montréal seraient, selon l'agent fabriqués, à partir de la peau d'un animal en voie d'extinction.

Entendant cela, je ne pus m'empêcher de penser qu'il y aurait peut-être encore eu des indiens en Haïti et en Martinique si les ancêtres de cet agent avaient eu autant d'attention pour ces indiens qui, rappellons-le, étaient des êtres humains et non des animaux.

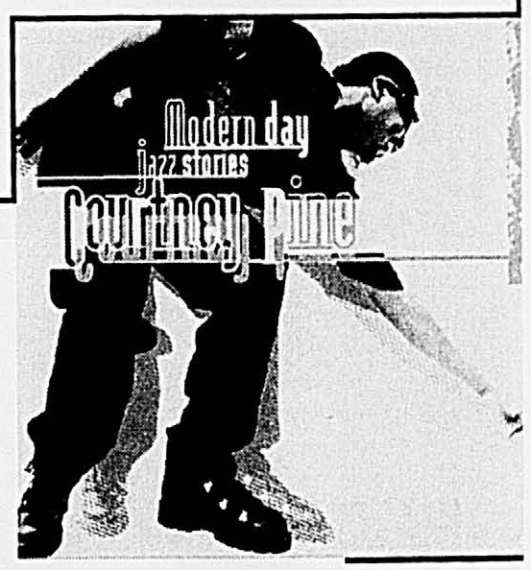
Finalement, il a répondu à ma soeur ,qui l'accusa d'être raciste, qu'il ne faisait qu'appliquer la loi. Devant une telle réponse, deux questions raciste ou l'agent qui applique cette loi ?

Pour ma part, je ne crois pas qu'il y ait au Canada des lois racistes . Le Canada est trop soucieux de son image à l'étranger pour permettre que de telles lois existent sur son territoire. Je sais que d'aucuns seront choqués quant à la raison que j'invoque pour expliquer l'inexistence de lois racistes au Canada, mais à ces gens je pose la question suivante: Comment expliquer que l'on ait au pays des lois non racistes lorsque des comportements racistes sont de façon subtile et tacite tolérés?

Car si l'on ne peut enrayer totalement le racisme du coeur des individus, on peut au moins s'assurer que les gens travaillant dans les aéroports internationaux, donc en perpétuel contact avec les étrangers,n'affichent pas des comportements aussi discriminatoires. Or, d'après ce que j'ai vu samedi dernier et ce que j'ai observé à plusieurs autres reprises à Mirabel, ce n'est pas le cas. Les agents responsables de la fouille agissent comme si "noir" était synonyme de crimes ou d'irrégularités. Tous les noirs sont automatiquement fouillés tandis que certains blancs ne le état des faits, pensez-vous vraiment que les choses ont évolué depuis la célèbre marche de Martin Luther King sur Washington?

# myuzik

## revue




Courtney Pine — *Modern Day Jazz Stories*
The Verve Group
Polygram Records

*Modern Day Jazz Stories*, the British saxophonist Courtney Pines' new album, manages to mix a fusion of Hip Hop and Coltrane. Mixing beats, scratching and sampling from other albums, he creates a base for his vibrant and dark tenor saxophone solos. Pine successfully reveals his message without drowning it!




Pharcyde — *Labcabincalifornia*
Delicious Vinyl
Capitol Records

The west coast rappers Pharcyde and their album *Labcabincalifornia* do not live up to expectations created by their first album *Bizarride*. Their song "Runnin'" made the Top Forty charts all over the United States and even caught the eye of mainstream America.

Unfortunately, this was the only song off their album worth mention. The rest of the album makes up only a mediocre sequel. One part entailed a father teaching his five year old son to curse on the mike. This was unnecessary and could be dangerous when heard by the wrong ears.

*—by Will Thomas*

# CLASSIFIED ADS

**Ads may be** placed through the Daily Business Office, Room B-07, University Centre, 9h00-14h00. Deadline is 14h00, two working days prior to publication.) **McGill Students & Staff** (with valid ID): $4.55 per day, 3 or more consecutive days, $4.00 per day. **General Public**: $5.70 per day, or $4.85 per day for 3 or more consecutive days. Extra charges may apply, and prices do not include applicable GST (7%) or PST (6.5%). Full payment should accompany your advertising order and may be made in cash or by personal cheque (for amounts over $20 only). For more information, please visit our office or call 398-6790. WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE. **PLEASE CHECK YOUR AD** CAREFULLY WHEN IT APPEARS IN THE PAPER. The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damages due to errors. Ad will re-appear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print any classified ad.

### 2-Movers/Storage

**Moving/Storage.** Closed van or truck local & long distance. Ott-Tor-Van-NY-Fla-7 days, 24 hours, low rates. Steve 735-8148.

### 3-Help Wanted

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**Children's camp in** Laurentians requires counsellor, instructors for waterskiing, sailboarding, sailing, swimming, canoeing, tennis, baseball, rockclimbing, volleyball, soccer, arts&crafts, drama, music. Telephone 485-1135. Fax resume to 514-485-1124.

### 5-Word Processing/Typing

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**Wordprocessing term-papers**, theses, reports etc. WordPerfect 5.1, Laser printer. Fast, professional service. Good rates. Close to McGill. Brigitte 282-0301.

### 7-For Sale

**Stat camera**. Itek 540. Good condition, maintained by KBR Graphics. $2500 or best offer. 398-6790 ask for Mark.

**Apple Stylewriter** for sale. Like new, hardly used. Purchased spring 95. $200 or best offer. 398-6790 ask for Marian or Mark.

### 10-Rides/Tickets

**Concert and Canadiens** hockey seats for sale. Rod Stewart, AC/DC, Cirque de Soleil. Info: 362-9302 Joe.

### 12-Personal

**Lose Weight Now!**
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### 13-Lessons/Courses

**Singing Lessons**
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**Library Research Problems?** "Discover Your Library" workshops on MUSE, PERUSE, CD-ROM, and Internet. See schedule on info McGill or call 398-5030.

### 14-Notices

McGILL NIGHTLINE 398-6246

**McGill Nightline open** 9pm-3am a confidential and anonymous line. We offer listening, referrals and information. Call at 398-6246 398-MAIN.

**As a McGill student**, you are a member of the Quebec Public Interest Research Group (QPIRG) at McGill. If you wish to relinquish your membership in this organization and claim your $3 refund, come to 3647 University St. 1-5pm Jan 29-Feb 16.

### 15-Volunteers

**Black Community Resource** Centre presently seeking volunteer tutors to work in various tutorial programs. If you need experience working with children ages 5-16 please contact Gail at 335-1083.

### 16-Musicians

**Looking to book** quality live music or on stage performers to entertain during open house 96 Sept 20-23. Call Claude at 398-5066 or email at claude@wmp.lan.mcgill.ca


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# EVENTS

## TODAY

**McGill Debating Union** holds its weekly Monday meeting and show round, starting promptly at 18h in 550 Sherbrooke, Rm 1175. All are welcome.

The Journal *Fire with Water, Journal for Survivors of Sexual Abuse* will hold a candle sale in Redpath Library from 10h30 - 16h30.

**McGill Faculty of Dentistry** is sponsoring *"How to Prevent Hardening of the Attitude"* a presentation to demonstrate that stress can be managed through humour. Strathcona Bldg, Rm M-1 from 19h - 21h, $25 per person.

- **Education Undergraduate Society** is sponsoring *"The 5th Annual Teachers' Career Day"* in the Shatner Ballroom, 9h - 16h.

## TUESDAY

- **Baha'i Studies at McGill** invites you to a table by Natasha Jauanmardi on *"Health and Nutrition: A Baha'i Perspective"* at 16h30 in the Wendy Patrick Rm, Wilson Hall. For more info call BITA at 848-0794.
- **Department of History** is hosting Dr. Eric H. Reiter who will speak on *"Scribes, Printers, and Readers in 15th Century Europe"* at 16h, Thomson House.
- **Third Annual McGill Body Image Forum** is presenting a short film *"Still Killing Us Softly"* and a panel presentation in Lea 132 from 19h - 21h. For more info call 398-6017.

## THURSDAY

- **McGill Student Health Services** will offer information sessions and screenings for eating disorders through the *National Eating Disorders Screening Program*, from 16h - 18h in Lea 232.
- **Concordia Science College** presents Dr. Roberto Peccei who will present *"Neutrinos: Keys to the Universe"* at 20h30 in the Hall Bldg. Auditorium. Admission is free. For more info call 848-3595.

## FRIDAY

- **Savoy Society of McGill** and **Da Capo Productions** present their *3rd Annual Broadway Review*. Shows are Fri. Feb. 9 and Sat. Feb. 10 at 20h at the St. James United Church. $8 General, $5 Students and Seniors.
- **McGill Debating Union** will hold its weekly practice rounds, starting at 17h30 sharp in Lea 15. All are welcome.


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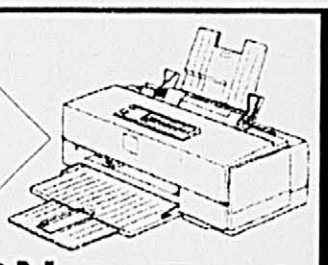
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